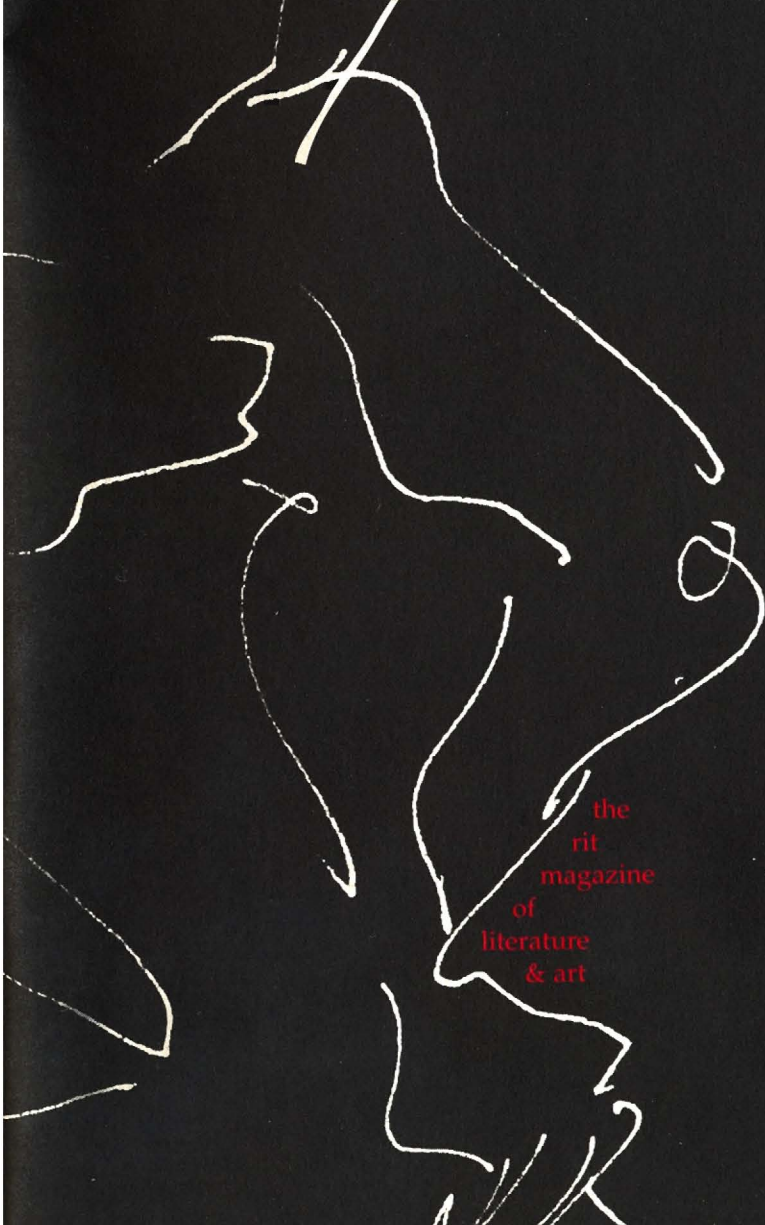


# Signatures



the  
rit  
magazine  
of  
literature  
& art

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Raven Black

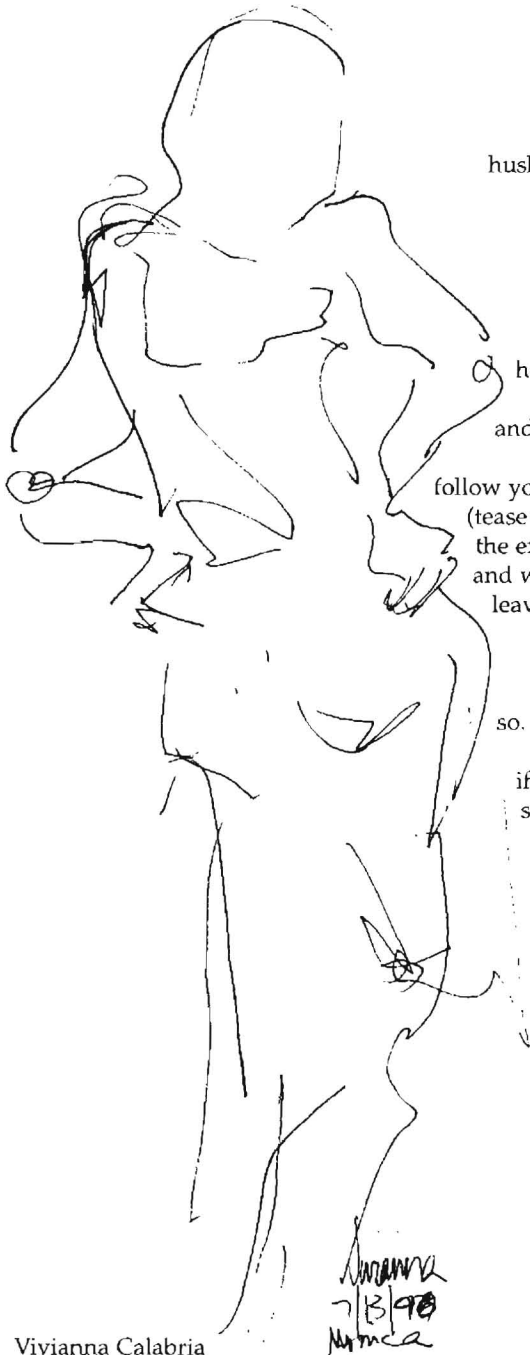
raven black  
and upward swept,  
the strands were always  
neatly kept.  
when let loose  
her shoulders graced,  
a place for child  
to hide her face.  
shorter styles  
in coming days,  
different lengths and  
different ways.  
but always soft  
and always fine,  
my rope to cling to  
and to climb.  
but I never got  
to see it fade,  
from raven black  
to light dove gray.  
the monster came  
to do her in,  
the thick black forest  
began to thin.  
on her pillow  
I would see,  
the threads laid out  
so gracefully.  
I hid a few  
somewhere to keep,  
raven black  
they make me weep.

Lisa Jo Ward

Morning crawls upon the horizon.  
The sun seeps through the window shades.  
I watch your eyes flutter open...  
a honey-dipped daze of harmony  
kisses away the nestled moon.  
Star-lit wishes mimic passive lullabies  
Introducing delicate hours,  
fresh on the clock,  
to the beginning of yesterday's  
distinct promise.

The afternoon's storm renders your  
face in my dreams.  
A stodgy slide of relief relishes  
the bronzed bruises trapped in my bandages.  
The buffet of maroon marigolds  
trifle upon my desk of treason.  
A tornado of vanishing tears  
clear away the dismal triangles

Aimee Whyte



## Consume

watch your tongue my dear  
speak not of what you fear  
hush the dreams that roam your head  
rise and leave my bed

or i will consume you

and keep bits of your soul down on paper to recite to myself  
i will love you in more than memory and taste salt upon my skin  
helpless and hopeless my grasp will be steady

and i promise to consume you

follow your steps and leave me no trail  
(tease me not with visions of white in which i lie, praying for release)  
the extension of my being would slip like innocence from my hand  
and with lyrics and flesh i would force you between my walls  
leaving on your lips my blood of surrender

be silent my love, because if you spoke too soon i could.

so...

if you value your worth  
silently step from my earth  
or in my pen you'll be for all time  
consumed, you will be nothing but mine.

Erica Rodriguez

**stars on your ceiling**

She hits me like the spin on a perfectly formed car accident

*pure white evil*

leaves me

*close enough to taste your breath on my tongue*

shaking

*close enough to hear your heart in my skull*

spacing

*surrounded by denim, polyester & spandex*

chain smoking

*with the slightest tease of skin on my equal*

and I still can't catch my breath

*"guilt is music"*

She feels like silk candy narcotics in my arms

*but tonight i will not be the source of your song*

leaves her

*in the long darkness i will not supply soft notes*

writhing

*hiding my lyrics behind button-fly jeans*

twitching

*temporarily satisfied with what if's and if only's*

head spinning

*4 am*

I need to catch my breath

*and the stars have dimmed to silence*

I can't ever have her

*and breath has moved to the back of my neck  
(and sex to the back of my mind)*

because I can't ever lose her

She consumes me. . .

*animal passion exists only in an ice cube*

-vinny

*and tonight that is more than enough*

*-smokey*

## One Empty Hole

It's time we finished the game,  
The steel traps rusted shut by now,  
And soon I won't remember who went last.

If only George were here,  
He's got the directions on his brain.  
Before, I could swear I heard him sleeping,  
Whispering in his dreams,  
Purple Parkplace, hot hotel, red means dead,

Donut pass strait to hell.

It was the whispering of a one armed man,  
Part of him already in the ground.  
He can feel the earth now.

Walking,  
I remember the butts,  
A compulsory habit, walking,  
But the game calls,  
The game, genre and steel,  
And both rust in acknowledged short time.

I'm pretty backward.  
I can't rust.  
I am the shy one on now,  
The scruples, stinnry hard,  
And puffunctatly double me as I grow.

Come on!  
The movie's pause is long gone,  
And I can't stop the trembling,  
The spun dial stopped where it may,  
Your green tea's gone cold,

And seeped way to rain,

The damn pieces, dust ruddled over,  
The pizza pie contained,  
All gone emptied of scraps of cheese,  
All gone.

Pick up the dice.  
Roll Twice.  
Spin the wheel.(I can't go, I can't.)  
Forfeit a turn.  
Pick up George's gun,(You do it!)  
Thy will be done,  
And let's finish the game.

P.J. Gaynard

### Image of a city

Rising out of the woods  
Emerges a city,

Woods once Walt's,  
Woods once Henry David's.

The gleaming lights,  
the modern city  
Belong to Kerouak,  
belong to Ginsberg.

A city of the East,  
A city of industry,

Traders, trappers,  
Canals,  
Readymade suits to win the West,  
Clothing the 49.

A prospering town twinkling  
in Nathaniel's eye.

A clearing in the woods  
affords a view.

Keith Hinsman

### Answering Machine

I am not here right now  
And you are listening to a machine.  
How scary is that?  
We talk to machines as though they're people  
Because we're afraid of being left behind.  
So, we buy a machine to act like a human  
While we go to work  
And act like machines.  
Role reversal-  
Man into machine  
And machine into man.  
You can still leave a message  
But, do you really need to talk to a machine?  
Go out and act human!  
Beep.

Melanie Evans

### Marlboro Man Pantoum

Billboards & cowboys & 40 years pass...  
Drag out the headstones; 2 Marlboro men are dead!  
I didn't know the actor but I knew a natural  
in 1996; he was 21 and long burned out.

Drag out the headstones; 2 Marlboro men are dead!  
I had my very own Marlboro man  
in 1996; he was 21 and long burned out.  
He has the worst case of the drags that I've ever seen.

I had my very own Marlboro man:  
A solitary cowboy type, sexy as hell and definitely in control.  
He has the worst case of the drags that I've ever seen,  
and is a total drag himself although he hides it well.

A solitary cowboy type, sexy as hell and definitely in control  
Of everything but me (every night a drag-out fight),  
he was a total drag himself although he did it well.  
Anyway, 2 Marlboro men are dead. Best drag out the headstones.

## Siblings

Ben carefully dried off the last dish and placed it in the overhead cupboard. The kitchen of the old farm house was neat and tidy, a warm and snug place. Through the window above the sink, the last dying rays of the afternoon light filtered in, illuminating tiny motes of dust drifting through the air. Like tiny angels, Ben thought. Tiny lost angels, searching for a head of a pin to dance upon.

In the other room, he heard his mothers rocker slowly creaking back and forth on the wooden floorboards. Creak, creak, a steady even rhythm. He knew she would be working on her cross stitch, as she always did. HOME SWEET HOME, they read. It was all she ever made, and every wall of the house held a small collection of the yellow and white yarn decorations. HOME SWEET HOME, for as long as he remembered, even before

Pa died. Creak creak creak, stitch stitch stitch, HOME SWEET HOME.

Ben walked into the living room where his

mother sat.

"I have to go into town, Ma." He said. "Tractor needs a new coil."

"You can go to town tomorrow," his mother said without looking up. "Go do your chores with your siblings. Laws yes."

Creak creak creak.

"But Ma, tractor won't start without the coil." Ben pressed.

"Don't talk back, laws yes." Ben's mother replied. "Mind your mother."

Ben sighed, and walked back into the kitchen. He knew he could never get out of his chores with his siblings. He bent down and took out from under the sink a packing crate with a hinged lid. Hefting it onto one shoulder, he carried it

back into the living room to where the cellar door was located. As he passed his mother again, she mumbled 'Mind your father, laws yes, he provided.'

"Pa's dead, Ma." Ben reminded her, and pulled out a key ring from his pocket. On the door to the cellar







Josh Comen

was a cross stitch. HOME SWEET HOME. Ben fumbled with the old lock for a moment before it fitfully sprang open, and carefully descended the stairs that lay beyond.

The old boards of the stairway creaked under his weight, and tiny puff's of sawdust arose from his feet. But they were sturdy, and in good repair. Ben saw to that, as he did most every thing on the farm. As soon as he reached the bottom of the stairs, he felt its eyes upon hem. But he ignored it,

a s  
always.  
H e  
w o u l d  
save it  
for last.

He went to the twins first. Thankfully they were slumbering at the moment, entwined together on the old brass bed that they shared. Above the bed was an old and yellowed poster held to the wall by a couple of rusted tacks. Extraordinary oddities extravaganza, the title read, and beneath the words was an old hand painted picture of the twins, their soft innocent eyes peering out into the world.

Ben gazed down on the twins for a moment. The appendage of flesh that joined their hips together led them to sleep with a pillow under their back for extra support. They were small diminutive girls, bony and with pale blotchy skin. Ben's eyes paused for a moment on the tapered tips of their ovoid shaped heads, and then down to their softly snoring mouths. The twins were not dangerous, not really. But

they were vastly baby teeth had never fall-retarded and had to en out, but their adult teeth had grown in anyway. The result was their mouth was a jagged hole of sharp projections, and Ben had long ago learned to be wary of them.

From the crate he had lugged down the cellar, he pulled a picnic basket that

mother had prepared earlier, and left it by the bed. When the twins woke up they would find it and eventually start gorging themselves, for they ate quite a bit for such small women. Ben just hoped they did not toss the food around the cellar like they sometimes did, and start crying because they could no longer reach some tasty treat.

After all, the chains that bound them to the bed did not stretch very far.

Ben then moved on to the faded pink door set into the back of the cellar. When his Ma and Pa and their family first moved into the old farmhouse, back when

Pa's traveling sideshow had gone broke, it was originally planned that Isabelle would have a room upstairs. But after a few days of her moving about and the old floorboards groaning ominously under her weight, Pa decided it would probably be safer for

her to be on firmer ground. And thus he had built this room for her in the cellar.

Ben took a few deep breaths of the damp and musty cellar air before he opened the door. The stench still hit him though, like a solid wall of foul smog. It was so thick he felt he could taste it on his tongue. He waited a moment to allow his eyes to adjust to the dimness of the room that was illuminated only by the flickering blue white light of a small television.

Isabelle sat within, monstrous and dun unmoving, her eyes glued to the tiny television. There was a bed in the room, moldy and decayed, unused for years. Isabelle herself sat in the middle of the room, naked except for a queen sized bedsheet wrapped around her body. A large puddle of feces and urine surrounded her like a polluted halo, and her immensely bloated front was glazed with the crusted remains of dried vomit.

"Hello Isabelle," Ben called softly.

There was no response, however, nor did Ben expect one. He suspected her mind had long ago turned to mush. Ben had not seen her stand, let alone speak, in years. There was one time, however, a few months back when a rat had chewed

through the extension cord that powered the television. Left alone in darkness, a high kneeling whine had seeped out of Isabelle's mouth and increased in pitch until it was a frantic and haunting wail. Once Ben had discovered the severed cord, he had hastily repaired it and the television had flickered back to life. Isabelle's sobbing had been quickly quieted, and she had resumed her bland and indifferent gaze upon the screen. Yet another time when a summer storm had knocked the antenna on the roof off, and Isabelle's television had been reduced to staticky

snow, she had shown no change. Ben had felt uncomfortable with her insensibility to what was being shown, and had repaired the antenna as soon as the rain had stopped.

Ben reached over and carefully peeled off the soiled bed sheet from off of Isabelle's body. The sound the sheet made reminded Ben of the time he had torn down some old wall paper from an upstairs room. Back when Pa was still running the sideshow, he had cleaned Isabelle in a massive old wooden tub that they had carted around from state to state. But she had long past outgrown any hopes of fitting into the tub, and it had long ago been turned into firewood.

Tossing the sheet into a pile to be laundered later, Ben

because they could lay eggs in the sores and a few days later maggots would be swarming. Ben then had to use tweezers to pick them out one by one before treating the sore with a little first aid kit that he kept under the kitchen sink.

Ben quickly finished the job, careful not to get the little television set wet. Once he finished he coiled the hose back up in the corner, and hung a little pine tree shaped air freshener from a pipe on the ceiling. He then carefully closed the faded pink door behind him.

He decided there was no point in licking it.

As Ben made his way to the well in the center of the cellar, he once again felt the things eyes following him. He purposefully ignored it, knowing that it irritated the thing. He always saved it for last, just to annoy it. Instead he concentrated on feeding the Flipper boy.

When Ben was little, He remembered when the Flipper

uncoiled a green garden hose that was linked to a spout on the wall, and proceeded to spray Isabell down. He checked carefully to make sure none of the bed sores were festering. In the summer months he had to be watchful of fly's getting down to the cellar,

boy had his own tank to swim around in. Born with arms and legs flattened out into wide fleshy appendages, the Flipper boy was more at home floating in liquid than on land. Possessing little more intelligence than the twins, the Flipper boy had for sime reason gone mean. Once when Pa was alive and tried to feed him, Flipper had leaped out of his tank and had gone for Pa's throat. Shocked and outraged, Pa had thrown Flipper into an old well that was located in teh cellar floor, an artifact left over form the days when the farmhouse had no plumbing. He had been down there ever since.

Ben slid off the heavy board that covered the well, and shined his pocket light down the dark hole. Deep down below he saw a pair of beady eyes staring up at him, and a tiny howl drifted up. Ben suspected theat the well might be connected to an underground network of natural caverns, because sometimes days at a time would pass and Ben would not see the Flipper boy down at the bottom. Ben opened the crate that he had brought down with him, and pulled out a bucket of table scraps and dumped it down the dark opening. Sounds of

splashing and contented slurping drifted up. Satisfied, Ben slid the cover back into place.

Ben decided there was no point in putting it off any longer. His other siblings he attended to with relative indifference, to him it felt like tending to farm yard animals. But the thing was different, it was at the same time less human and more human than his other siblings. Because the thing was intelligent.

And Ben hated it.

He turned around and approached the shelf where the thing lived. On the wall behind it was another old carnival poster, a relic of days bygone. See the incredible living head, The poster read, freak of nature survives with no body! The

picture on the poster depicted a rather ordinary human head smiling from a table. Pa had decided the picture would look normal, because if folks knew what it looked like before they paid their two dollars to go into the tent and see what lay within,

well, they would have probably waited outside.

"Hello, Ben." The Head called softly from across the room. "So nice of you to come visit."

The Head was a fleshy ball of dark and grayed tissue about three feet in diameter. Loose folds of flesh drooped around its somewhat sphereish form, and its complexion had always reminded Ben of charred elephant skin. A tiny scrunched up face, no bigger than a softball, peered out from the center of its obscene mass. A tiny toothless mouth flapped open when it talked in its sorry and whispery voice, an done of its eye's was almost twice as large as the other, except it was milky white and blind.

The other eye was strikingly human, full of intelligence and hate.

Ben set down the crate he had brought down to the cellar, and pulled from it its remaining contents. Several jars of Gerber baby food. The Heads digestive system was small and undeveloped, and could not properly consume

regular food. Not that it had any teeth to chew it with, anyway. So Ben had to come down here and

carefully spoon feed it. And listen to it.

"Tell me, Ben is the sun out today?" The Head asked in a conversational tone of voice after Ben had spooned in its first heaping of cream of chicken.

"Yeah, it's out. Or was. Should be setting now." Ben replied.

"Ahhhh, the sun". The Head sighed. "I remember the sun. Father used to bring me up once in a while to watch it set. So beautiful. Tell me Ben did Father ever watch the sun set with you?"

Ben ignored it.

A few more minutes passed in silence as Ben fed it another jar.

"You know, Benny boy, you need to set some more traps down here. I do believe there has been more rats sneaking around lately." The Head told Ben.

"I haven't seen any rats. None in the traps, anyway."

"Ohhh," The Head chortled, "They are around. Why, just the other

night one of them got right up here on the shelf with me. What could I do? Not shoo it away with a broom, certainly. And arat nobbling on my face would be most uncomfortable, indeed. So you know what I did? I stuck out my tongue and wiggled it around like a tasty little worm. Once the rat came close enough, I bit that fuckers head off."

The Head erupted into laughter, causing its bulk to wiggle like a crusty Jell-O. Ben looked around the shelf, but did not see any rats corpse. The Head could be lying again. It often did. But then again, other rats

might have dragged the dead one away. Ben shuddered at the thought.

"I hate you," he muttered under his breath.

But the Head had good hearing. "You hate me? You, hate?" The Head said incredulously. "You don't even know what hate is. I know hate, I thrive on it. Month after month, sitting in this cellar, thinking about how you walk around in the world as happy as you please. Hell, hate keeps me alive. Hate for you."

The Head paused for a moment.

"Father hated you too." It said.

Ben felt his face go red. "Shut up" he said through clenched teeth.

"Oh, its true, hated your happy little pink guts. I may look like a nasty old turd stashed away where no one can see me, but he still loved me. Loved me because I was his child."

The Head's good eye glared at Ben.

"I remeber the day when the man came. I heard it through the heating pipes. What was selling? Bibles? Farm equipment? It doesn't matter. What was important was that father was gone that day, and mother took this stranger. Just spread her legs like an old carnie whore, I could hear them grunting and thrashing all the way down here. I just had to tell father when he came home."

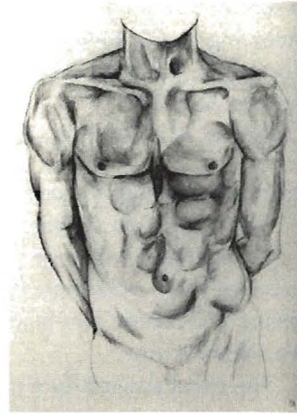
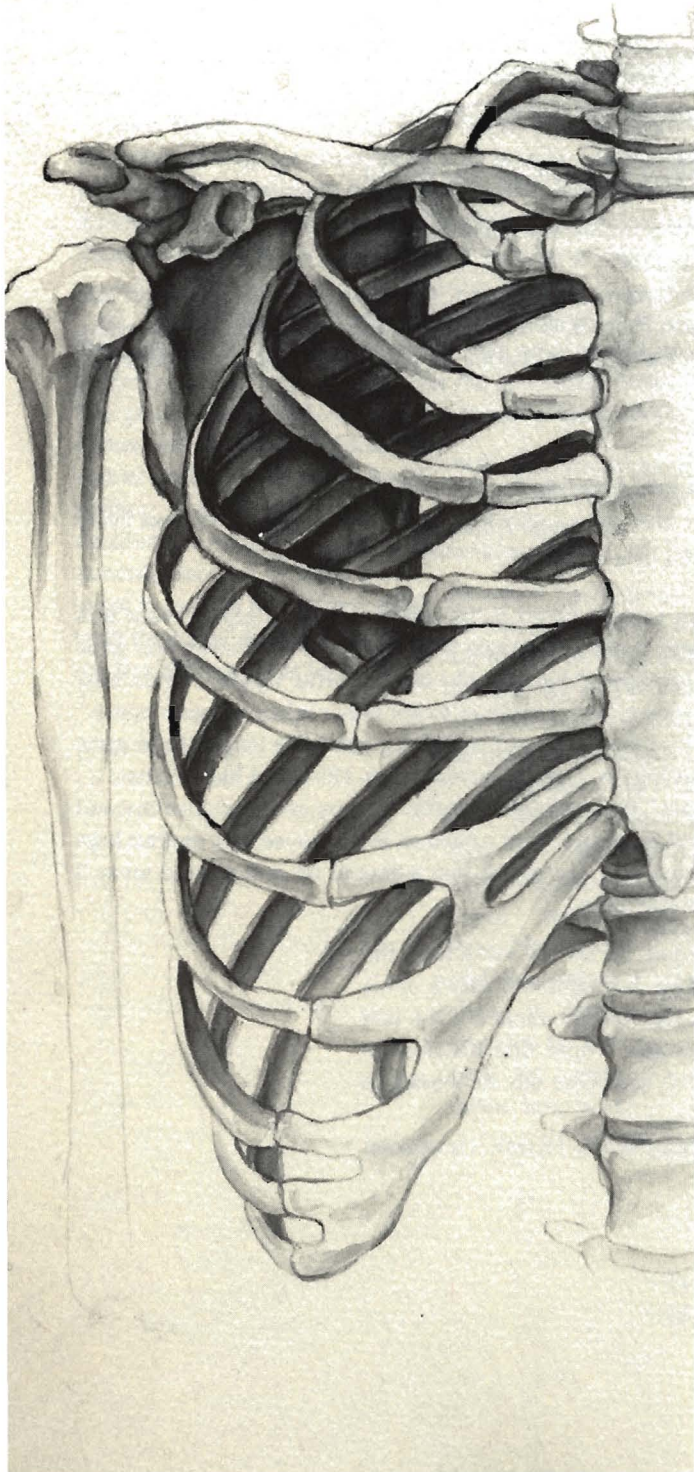
Ben spooned the last of the Gerber into the Head with a shaking hand. He longed to be gone with this thing, this wretched little imp sitting on a shelf, taunting him. His hated half brother.

"And nine months later you were born." Head stated wistfully. "Happy and pink, healthy and smart. Father wanted to be rid of you, said he didn't want a bastard in his house. But mother kept you, lord knows why. Father was said from that day on, he just withered up and wasted away. I cried when he died. I cried that you were still alive."

Saying nothing, Ben wiped the Heads mouth and tossed the empty jars into a wastebucket.

He still had time to make it to town, buy the coil that the tractor needed. He turned away from the head, and started up the stairs. The entire time he felt its single good eye boring into the back of his head. One day, mother would die, and Ben would be able to leave. He thought about it a lot, just get up and walk out the door and keep going. Maybe the towns people would find his siblings down her in the cellar, perhaps dead of starvation by then. Ben didn't care. One day he would be free.

On the top of the stairs was a cross stitch hung on the door. HOME SWEET HOME. He opened the door and walked out.



Melissa Sanford

### Higher Dimensions

From here, crouched, knees to face  
We cannot see the curve of space  
Or survey time's eternal loops.  
Lower, closer, minute, we stoop  
To grasp our present opaque plane,  
And gain a truer view - in vain.  
Forgotten now: the instinct to stand,  
To stretch our unused legs and scan  
What once was only horizon. We wait  
For the day of our unfolding, a state  
When time and space unspan, compress,  
And scroll into a sea of glass:  
Bright, endlessly visible, a sphere,  
Alive with light from everywhere.

Alan Schenkler

Melissa Sanford

supplicant

o please  
let me kneel  
i pray

my favorite idol  
it has been too long  
hooded one  
making my way through over grown tangles  
parting a path through the deep black growth

carefull skirting the valley  
the worshipers long to go down  
reverently ask to enter  
this most sacred space

o please  
let me kneel  
i pray  
at your feet

Antonio Chiarenza

Winter Wheat  
green  
comes up down  
hill from yellow  
cornstalks not yet turned  
under  
to the right red  
brown grass and  
brown black earth  
There, a low place crystal white  
(snow covered)

fields in patchwork  
quilted hills  
And I fancy two lovers wrestle  
neath those folds and swells  
. . . or maybe only one  
the mother  
Earth pulls the blanket close  
weeping for her daughter.

A. M. D. Chiarenza

Morning crawls upon the horizon.  
The sun seeps through the window shades.  
I watch your eyes flutter open...  
a honey-dipped daze of harmony  
kisses away the nestled moon.  
Star-lit wishes mimic passive lullabies  
Introducing delicate hours,  
fresh on the clock,  
to the beginning of yesterday's  
distinct promise.

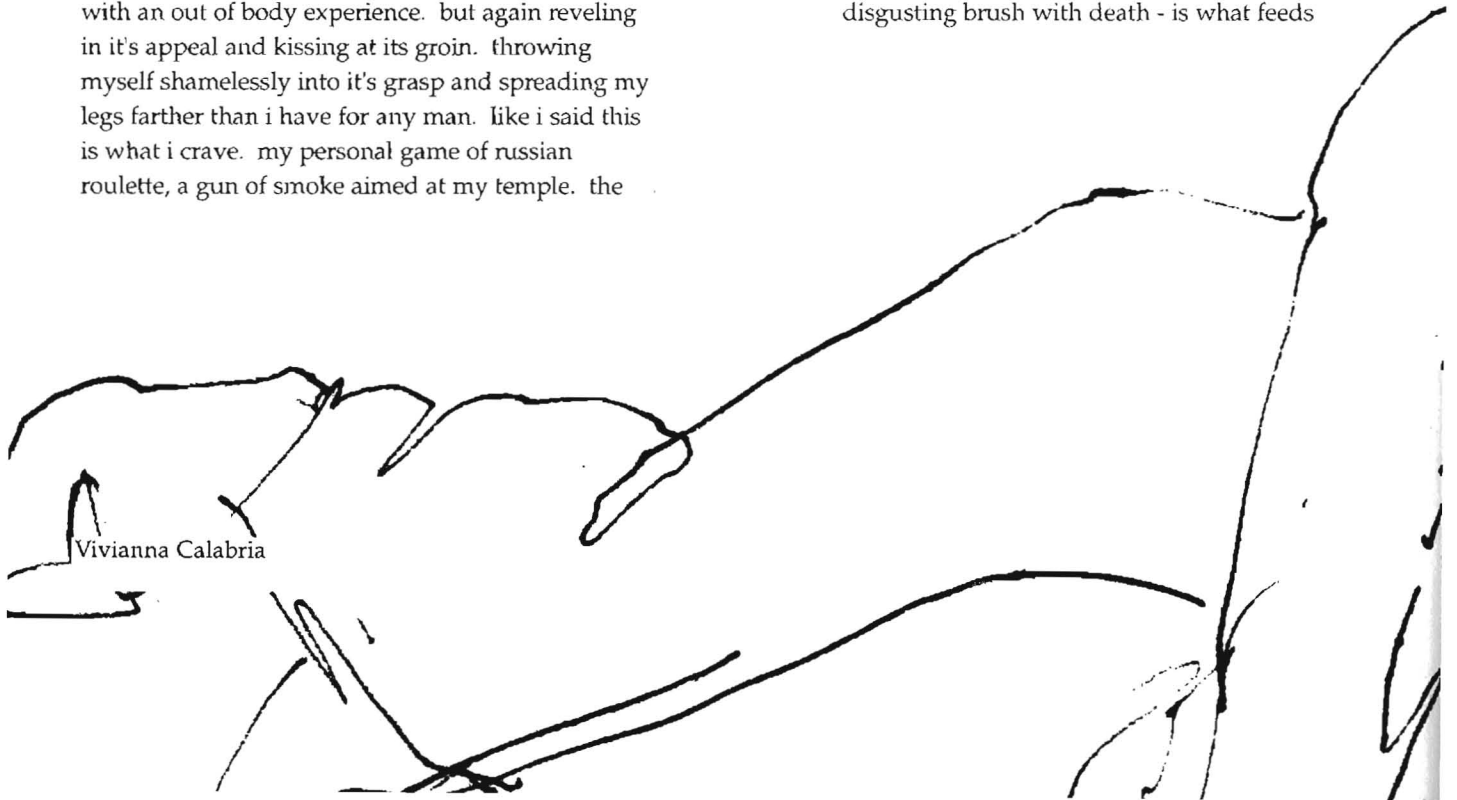
The afternoon's storm renders your  
face in my dreams.  
A stodgy slide of relief relishes  
the bronzed bruises trapped in my bandages.  
The buffet of maroon marigolds  
trifle upon my desk of treason.  
A tornado of vanishing tears  
clear away the dismal triangles

Aimee Whyte

## Untitled

that high, that near death high. that's the high i crave, the honey of my addiction, the sex of my longing, and the cries of my mother. with pulsing lights and musky bodies. i revel in the thought, that this may be my last. moment of life and all i know, faith, sorrow, remorse, desire. . . and arguably the most important love, can finally end. that this feeling mixed with - sexuality in the form of fear and anticipation that is making me wet - would take me to my final orgasm - to my exile of life. and unlike any of my dreams, it would only be a shitty excuse for making love. and all the confusion ends. and so long accustomed i am aggravated. and in the far reaches of my mind i thrash wildly through light and shadows. attempting my way out of this stereo-type, not wanting to cheapen this beauty with an out of body experience. but again reveling in it's appeal and kissing at its groin. throwing myself shamelessly into it's grasp and spreading my legs farther than i have for any man. like i said this is what i crave. my personal game of russian roulette, a gun of smoke aimed at my temple. the

white aura vibrating against my moist skin, in tune with the tremors of my heart. i run my eyes over faces, paranoid that they can read my wishes and somehow see the revolver i have directed at my head. pointing the bullet that would smash through my skull, erasing the one i have come to love and all i have come to hate. and life would become silent. and in this silence, i can sing. loud and clear and mystically in tune. and in this silence, i can dance. turning and flowing, with the grace of ballet and the stench of sex. i am singing and dancing in my own strange language and my own strange movement. and my biggest fear has transformed into my biggest desire. and amidst the loud palpating music and the drunken laughter, i am finally alone. this disgusting brush with death - is what feeds





me. what shapes my hands into an extension of addiction. the small taste of conclusiveness burns on my tongue and gives me a sickly pleasant urge to vomit. but even as the bile rises up to my teeth, as my blood begins to flow in a twisted race to my throat - everything stops. and in this halt, the silence ends. my mouth is mute and my feet struck dumb. and i sit quietly in the corner, ignoring the people who question how i feel. because now the words i once sang are no longer mine. and i have once again been ripped out of solitude. missing the tranquillity i held to myself, and resenting all who helped bring me out of it, i sit. and the music in my body has become a horrible steady pounding at the base of my brain. and in that lonely place,

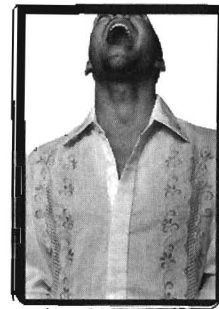
where once i thrashed around, i now sit and cry. no one can see or kiss my tears, they fall behind my eyes. they fall and connect, adhesively forming a puddle that begins at the base of my toes and fills my body. and i long for my womb of pain and seclusion. i feel cheated, yet somehow blessed. i embraced Death like the long lost lover whose element i have never fully removed from the taste buds of my tongue. and i kissed and caressed my lover, wound my legs about his waist and neck, and satisfied him with the tip of my mouth. and then this silent have where we made love, was shattered and disturbed by the strobe lights and throbbing base. and once again i was left unsatisfied, brought to the face of release and then rebound by my own chains. and in this defeat i gain strength and perseverance. to search for that high, that near death high. that's the high i crave, the honey of my addiction, the sex of my longing, and the cries of my mother.

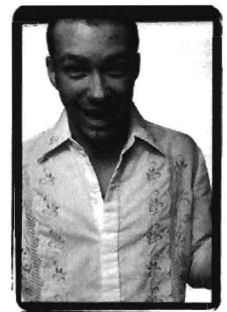
“Smokey”



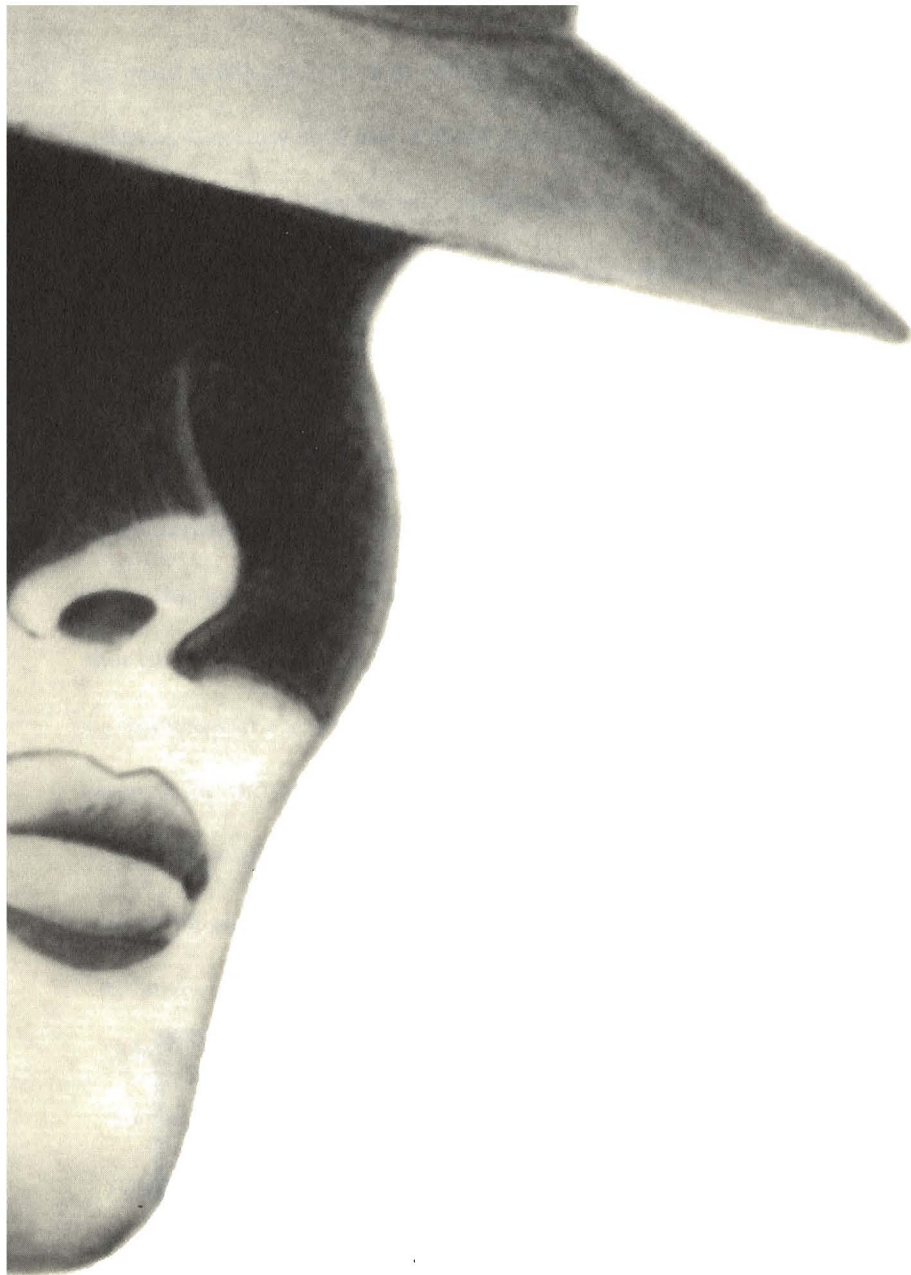
My hand holds the pole that waves the flag of independence, carry my soul like a lucky pendant, do knowledge drive-by's to pedestrian reverends, on Sundays, and Mondays, weekday workers I terrorize, by screaming "Open up your eyes!" Symbolizing crashing in ten-folds, many walk with blindfolds, the young and the old, fools searching for gold, they say, who's they, apparently those who say that heaven will not accept gays. But wait, chill, everything makes sense, seek further for the truth and the soul becomes less dense. I'm immense in a world of negative producing spiritual essence, nightmares about a war between a dove and a crescent, with a star, I socialize with scholars in a bar, drinking alcohol, Ph.D. degrees made us professional outlaws, I pause, to cleanse my wounds from failures claws. I either move my jaws or my thoughts to go somewhere, beyond, and far, somewhere over there, forget pointing, I'll show you with a telescope, taken notes of what I wrote is illegal because it's dope!

William Bookman





Sarah Ammann



"\$\$\$"

Erin Sarofsky

INT SUBWAY

Darkness, save the omnipresent fluorescent ceiling fixtures which cast a green glow through the weaved iron bars. Emptiness, save half-rumpled sections of the Metro Report billowing onto the tracks. The sound of duct tape peeling away from its cardboard roll.

INT SUBWAY TRACKS

An UNSEEN MAN, the anxious type, is hunched over the tracks as he rips off a section of duct tape and delicately lays it across one of the "dead" tracks. The unseen man stands up on his feet, taking a deep breath as he pulls a velvet sack out of his jacket pocket. Delicately, he eases onto his knees while holding the sack a few feet above the concrete.

With absolute precision, he unravels the sack's string bind. His cautious hand removes a single incandescent LIGHT BULB, which shines with the urinal-green tinge of the subway fluorescents. The unseen man places the light bulb onto the track socket-end first and then on its side, wrapping the duct tape around the bulb in one fluid motion.

The unseen man, seemingly relieved of the weight of the world, falls over onto his side and admires his handiwork from a safe distance.

CUT TO:

EXT PENTHOUSE BALCONY MORNING

The sunrise is blinding. A strapping American man in his middle-

ages, FRANK, is leaning against the railings and admiring the view as the sun pokes its way around a city's many skyscrapers. He is nude and smoking a cigarette. The balcony door is ajar, revealing Frank's half-asleep wife, HELEN, laying across a mattress in the bedroom.

HELEN

Good morning, Frank. Frank nods without turning around to acknowledge her.

FRANK

It is a good morning.

HELEN

What day is it?

FRANK

You know what day it is, it's Monday.

Helen buries her face in the pillow.

HELEN

No, honestly. I didn't.

FRANK

Shopping day for kitty.

HELEN

I couldn't buy anything that we don't already own or haven't already destroyed.

FRANK

Kitty want a new car?

Helen rolls over and basks in the sunlight reflecting off of Frank's chisel-chipped figure.

HELEN

What's the use?

FRANK

You could get around, maybe lose that face of yours.

Helen sighs.

HELEN

I remember when I used to have you in the mornings before you went to work.

Frank blinks, but makes no conciliatory gestures.

HELEN

I remember that one morning . . . when I took you orally. On your way to the office! In the Saab! I didn't even brush my teeth first! (pleading) Just how you like it . . .

Frank enjoys the final drag.

FRANK

I take the train to work now, poms-poms. You know that.

Frank withdraws and flicks his spent butt off the balcony as it plunges into the traffic and commotion below.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT SUBWAY CAR

Frank, now wearing a sharp suit, is sitting inside the train car, sizing up the other commuters. His briefcase is sitting on his lap.

INT SUBWAY TRACKS

The light-bulb, still uncompromised under its protective mesh of duct-tape, rests on the tracks as the incoming train approaches.

INT SUBWAY CAR

As Frank spies at the commuters around him (all are reading newspapers that proclaim "YOU ARE HAPPY" across their headlines), he notices a TRANSSEXUAL enter from the automatic doors at the opposite end of the car. He/she has a purple nylon scarf draped across his neck to hide his/her adam's apple.

As the transsexual walks up the aisle, Frank notices the transsexual's misshapen figure and eyes it up and down. Frank makes a kissy face once he's certain the other passengers aren't looking. But

the transsexual scoffs, giggles, and wanders through the train's other pair of automatic doors.

INT SUBWAY TRACKS

SLOW-MOTION:

The subway train rolls over and crushes the light-bulb, spraying a few wisps of clear liquid which get caught in the wheels' inertia and roll away.

CUT TO:

INT UNDERGROUND PARKING

GARAGE

Helen, now dressed for success and wearing a purse under her arm, walks past rows and rows of jet black off-road trucks. Helen pulls out her car keys and presses a button to deactivate her car alarm.

BEEP-BEEP. A Saab identifies itself as Helen's as its tail-lights flash on and off. Helen stands a few feet away, staring at the finish. Walking around to the front of the car, she stares down the emblem mounted between the two headlights.

A face-off ensues for about ten seconds.

Helen snaps, walking away in a huff, not acknowledging the car. Once she is out of frame, the Saab's tail-lights go BEEP-BEEP once more.

INT FACTORY

Frank overlooks a bustling factory full of whirring components and boiling chemical tanks. He takes out a handkerchief and covers his mouth as he clears his throat. A goggled woman in a lab-coat, DORIS, gingerly approaches Frank and taps him on the shoulder.

DORIS

Mr. Swizzles?

Frank swings around, out of breath.

FRANK

Yes, Doris?

DORIS

The new "teammates" are here, sir. I figured you were the man to show them around and give 'em what-for.

Frank nods and regains his breath. Two TRAINEES in similar lab-coats step forward from behind Doris, who introduces them both, pointing first to the male trainee.

DORIS

This is Scott. He just graduated from Stanford with a degree in polymer chemistry. He'll be helping us out in research and development.

An over anxious SCOTT extends his hand to Frank.

SCOTT

A real pleasure, Mr. Swizzles!

Frank, who is eyeing the plain female trainee, shakes Scott's hand.

FRANK

Sure.

Scott retreats out of sight as the goggled flunky points to the female trainee.

DORIS

And this here is Rhoda. She'll be, uh -- joining us in the design department.

Rhoda nods and smiles.

RHODA

A pleasure to meet you, Mr. Swizzles.

Frank confusedly glances at Doris, who



winks back at him suggestively. Frank suddenly comes to attention.

FRANK

Rhoda? Rhoda! Yes! A real pleasure to have you aboard!

This time it is Frank who extends his hand in greeting. He is warmly received by a grinning Rhoda, suddenly overwhelmed by Frank's attention. Scott begins biting his fingernails.

INT FACTORY FLOOR

Frank is giving a tour of the facilities. An enraptured Scott walks next to him while Rhoda lags behind, pensively glimpsing at knobs and meters as she passes them.

FRANK

In those tanks we keep the latex at a boil, ready for any given run during the day.

Frank leads the two trainees to an assembly line littered with workers. As pistons squeal and racket, several flesh-colored, oblong dildoes begin rolling off the line one-by-one.

FRANK

The latex travels through piping and ends up here in the fabrication unit.

Frank picks up one of the goods. Rhoda blushes.

FRANK

Caucasian flesh-tone, of course. These units generally move out of the warehouse a bit faster than the mulatto varieties, but market research does tell us that our core market is white professionals age thirty-two to forty-five.

Rhoda blushes and looks down at her feet. Frank sets the item back on the assembly line. He notices that Scott is fixated on a handful of the machines' pressure gauges.

FRANK

Question, Scott?

Scott leaps to attention.

SCOTT

Any translucent latex varieties, sir?

FRANK

Variety doesn't mean neon pink latex, rookie. Some of the boys upstairs may disagree with me, but I'd like to think that an attention



to life-like detail will always outsell glow-in-the-dark gimmickry any day of the week!

Frank resumes the tour as a humbled Scott brings up the rear.

FRANK

We've been making a pretty penny in the last ten years. Nobody really seems to behaving sexual intercourse anymore. Unhappily married housewives, frustrated college boys, gays and lesbians . . . they're our bread and butter.

Scott inches his hand a bit, ready to ask a question. Before he gets the chance, Frank sets his hand on Scott's shoulder.

FRANK

Let me tell you what, boy. I'm going to take Rhoda here and show her around the design area. How 'bout if I just leave you down here with the machines for a while? Scott gulps.

SCOTT

Do you mean it, sir?

FRANK

Of course I do! Now you run along!

SCOTT

Yes, sir!

Scott runs back to watch the pressure gauge that caught his attention twenty paces previously. Frank offers Rhoda his arm in escort.

FRANK

Shall we?

CUT TO:

EXT CAR DEALERSHIP DAY

Helen is sitting on the hood of a maroon

Jaguar. A very nervous  
CAR SALESMAN is doting  
over her. Helen innocently  
chips a piece of paint off  
the finish with her high-  
heels.

SALESMAN

You mean, including all the  
accouterments.

HELEN

Yes, everything, everything  
that's sitting right here in  
this bucket of bolts right  
now.

SALESMAN

You mean, including the  
stereo.

Helen begins rooting  
through her purse.

HELEN

How much is it going to  
cost me to drive this car out  
of this lot? The sticker says  
forty-two-thousand.

SALESMAN

The sticker said that?

Helen nods and then pulls  
a grey-colored credit-card  
out of her purse, handing it  
to the salesman.

SALESMAN

Have you thought about  
possibly --

HELEN

(huffy)

Please, just send me the

bill. I don't even care.

The salesman stands still and dumb, huff-  
ing and puffing through his nose.

HELEN

And stop breathing near me!

INT FACTORY - DESIGN AREA

A large sign on the wall reads "DESIGN  
AREA." Frank opens a door and enters the  
room, flipping on a light-switch and  
motioning Rhoda inside. The room is full  
of dormant machinery. There is a set of  
gynecological stirrups in the corner of the  
room.

FRANK

Normally you've got technicians and assis-  
tants and everyone else cramming up the  
whole damn place! But not today, I think  
they're testing out some new battery motor  
or something . . .

Frank takes his handkerchief and starts  
coughing. Rhoda suddenly notices the stir-  
rups in the corner. One of the overhead flu-  
orescents shorts out. Frank notices Rhoda's  
discomfort and laughs, pointing at the stir-  
rups.

FRANK

Oh, that thing! Don't you worry about that.  
It's a tad frightful at first, but . . . well, after  
a few molds, you probably won't even  
think about it.

Rhoda glances around at the floor, uncom-  
fortable and uneasy.

FRANK

Now don't tell me you're having second  
thoughts! It's really nothing, you just  
spread your legs and one of the flunkies

pours the plaster over your privates and --

RHODA

(very curt)

My uncle explained the procedure to me, Mister Swizzles.

FRANK

Yes, yes . . . I guess -- I mean, I imagine he would have. Yes, that makes sense.

Frank smiles. Rhoda does not smile back.

FRANK

So then your uncle recommended you for this?

RHODA

Yeah, well . . . he -- yes, he did.

FRANK

But you've never done anything like this before.

RHODA

Umm . . . no.

Silence. Frank coughs.

EXT CITY STREET DAY

Helen weaves in and out of congested traffic with her new Jaguar. She's poking her fingers on the steering wheel along with an Eddie Money song ("Take Me Home Tonight") on the radio.

INT FACTORY - DESIGN AREA

Frank and Rhoda stand next to each other, both eyeing separate areas of the ceiling. Frank whistles.

FRANK

I tell you what. Why don't you climb into the stirrups?

The color in Rhoda's face instantly disappears. Frank suddenly takes out his handkerchief and starts coughing.

RHODA

Right . . . now?


FRANK

(out of breath)

Sure! You know, just to break the ice! That way you won't feel so uncomfortable during the actual casting process!

Rhoda is still.

RHODA



Um . . . I'm not so sure, Mr. Swizzles.

FRANK

(jokey)

Huh? Somethin' wrong? Somethin' the matter?

Frank laughs and play-boxes with Rhoda, his handkerchief still in his left hand. Rhoda is very fearful.

RHODA

I'm simply can't do that, Mr. Swizzles. I'd feel too uncomfortable.

Frank's temper takes a turn for the worst.

FRANK

Rhoda, you forget that I'm vice-president of development here at Leisurable Pleasurables! Every single new product, every single marketing angle has to meet with my explicit approval!

Frank begins violently coughing his way through his sentences, cornering Rhoda up against a wall.

FRANK

Do you expect me to just . . . wave my hand and initiate a quarter-of-a-million-dollar production initiative without . . . without . . . first precisely inspecting what we're going to be making twenty-thousand latex duplicates of?

Rhoda's eyes are creeping around Frank, looking for an escape.

Frank moves to put his handkerchief back in his front pocket when he suddenly notices that it is soaked in a black fluid that he has unwittingly been coughing up.

INT PARKING GARAGE DAY

Helen's Jaguar drives up an incline and slows onto level pavement.

A "14" is stencil-painted on a nearby wall. Helen swerves the car around, steers up another incline and disappears.

INT FACTORY - DESIGN AREA

Frank is stunned and motionless as he stares at the putrid mess of much sitting in his hands. Rhoda screams and runs out from around him and into the hallway. Frank weakly hobbles around and whispers out to her with his flayed vocal cords.

FRANK

Oh now, don't be that way . . .

Frank falls onto the floor.

EXT PARKING GARAGE - ROOF DAY

Helen, leaning on the protective-railings, smokes a cigarette and watches the pedestrians and taxis clog up the street. Honking, screaming. She tosses her lit cigarette off the roof and walks over to her parked Jaguar.

Helen opens the driver-side door, switches on the ignition and retrieves her purse from the passenger seat. With the car's engines vibrating, Helen reaches into her purse and pulls out a copy of a thick hard-cover book entitled "The Slouched Lawyer" by Joe Grishette. She takes two steps back, watching the purring Jaguar.

INT FACTORY - DESIGN AREA

Frank is lying on the floor and coughing into his hands. His handkerchief is laying a few feet away.

From the hallway, Frank hears bits and pieces of Rhoda's hysterical voice and the hurried footsteps of several men sprinting towards the room. He meekly glances over to the open door.

EXT PARKING GARAGE - ROOF DAY

With an unconcerned heave-ho, Helen tosses the book onto the car's gas pedal. The Jaguar lurches forward at a mild speed, swerving every which way, then breaks away with its tires screaming in a bee-line as it charges over the feeble protective-railing on the edge of the roof.

Helen only watches the Jaguar take a nose dive and vanish, leaving only a hovering wisp of exhaust ick hanging in the air. She hears the screams of the thirty or two

pedestrians who notice the car while it is still airborne. Before we hear the crash, we CUT TO:

INT FACTORY - DESIGN AREA

Six pairs of wing-tips (and two pairs of pumps) surround a silent, shaking Frank in indictment. Hopeless and helpless, a vulnerable Frank stares back at them in a terrified fashion, still coughing.

EXT PARKING GARAGE - ROOF DAY

The sounds of screaming, wrenched masses float up to Helen's ears from the sidewalks. Something explodes. More screams. Yet no sirens are heard.

An expressionless Helen pulls a cel phone out of her purse and clicks it on. Staring into the metro skyline, she presses the phone against her cheek.

HELEN

Taxi, please.

Helen glances up at the mid-day sun and picks something out of her teeth.

CUT TO BLACK.

Josh Slater

## A Ballad for Johnny Blonde American

Only child chiding his parents red,  
Mommy Turkish Daddy Blonde  
American.  
Daddy digs Blonde Americans asks for  
seconds.  
Mommy Turkish only knows broken  
English,  
Re-marries.

Daddy Blonde American Republican sin-  
gle dead beat,  
Mommy Turkish marries quirkish ran-  
dom man with cancer.  
Johnny blonde American, can't split citi-  
zenship.

Johnny blonde American becomes Switzerland, in a War which never ever ends on  
the eleventh hour. Johnny Blonde American grows wild like the cheap swag he  
takes. Middle-class crass Johnny Blonde American tries to smoke out the war that  
rages and smites him in and out.  
Unsuccessful.

Johnny Blonde Americans are socially inept. Failing now, trailing now, retro- society,  
Laissez fair. Johnny Blonde Americans are logically adept. Hide their pain, hinder it  
asunder, with a manic air.

Johnny Blonde American is now in college commanding book knowledge. Friends  
are Johnny's need, so he smokes all up with his swag weed. After all grades come  
later says psychologists under Maslow's tutelage. Johnny realizes his mind is never  
wholly freed.  
Disaster.

Johnny Blonde American doesn't sleep, madness creeps into  
the corners of his min. Mommy Turkish Daddy Blonde American are  
out of touch, zero crutch, till the cops pick him up.

Johnny's now strapped to a bed, his body cold lead, and sedatives for the temporari-  
ly insane, combo drool bibs. All inane, for a Blonde American doesn't swear they  
whispewhen it hurts the worst yell Screwdriver. Screwdriver.





Melissa Sanford

"Screw Driver" Johnny cries as  
illusions and delusions fill his eyes.  
The Suicide watchmen his only guide.  
Parents are notified, friends horrified  
but none surprised. We all knew it was  
coming to Johnny Blonde American,  
we just all felt powerless to stop it.

Johnny Blonde American is Bi-polar  
manic-depressive. Lithium replaces  
Mommy Turkish and Daddy Blonde  
American. Now we have to support  
him, where the Lithium ends and his  
parents never existed.

Eric M. Mize

### Visiting Dad

Cold car ride to a colder building.  
You've already started with me  
before the elevator hits three.

Six dancing white legs  
attached to soft shoes  
usher us into a clash of  
bedpans and breakfast.

I struggle to plot an exit.

"Stop acting like a bitch", you hiss.  
If only you had your cigarettes up here.

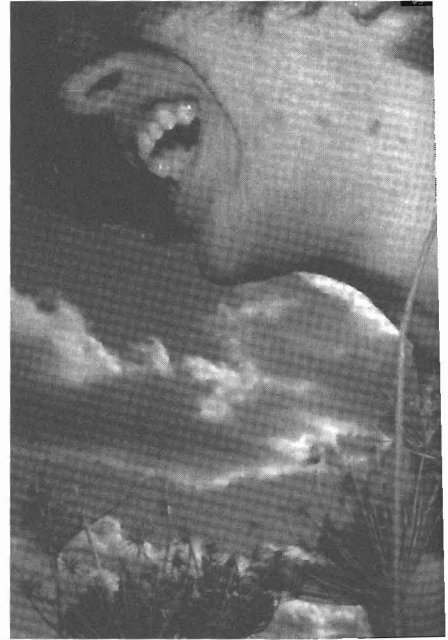
The words would escape  
with drapes of smoke, like usual.

Shannon Taggard

ripples replacing my stone solid expression and waves,  
dancing round my face,  
replacing my jaws and hairline  
sparkles of sunlight,  
glinting as my eyes  
and a complexion so pure and silky and fine  
that not even my fingers composed of dirt and blood,  
can help but to caress it  
and for once she is right and i don't need a man  
only the babbles of a stream that call to me in tongue  
(perhaps calling to a time where i lived from the earth instead of on it)  
my eyes close in longing and  
amidst these huge monsters of rock and granite,  
speckled with greens of all hues  
-amidst all this,  
where i am consumed by merely the thought of their grandness  
is finally where i feel my own size  
and my sex stretches for miles  
and i am larger

than all their desire and lust  
than love, selfish or sincere  
and most importantly  
i am larger

than any fool's erection  
both mountain and men can only find sense in kneeling  
but my view reaches far above the crouched figures  
and atop their backs  
i watch the sun set in my skin  
and the moon rise in my teeth  
and she from a million stars away  
can take pride in my largeness which has almost equaled her own  
and the dirt and blood has washed away  
the vision has sunk beneath the water,  
and as my eyes return to sight  
they reveal the only thing that lay under  
concealed by ripples and waves,  
in the deep blue and green of the lake  
i see  
only my face



Sarah Ammann



## Adventure

They wait among  
the houses bathed in moonlight, silver and blue.  
I move among Them,  
escaping the film of drowsy night.

I crouch among the bushes,  
so perfect to hide in,  
and slither between drives and porches,  
dodging streams of yellow porch light from  
the occasional sleepless house.

I jump over hedges when I'm feeling confident.  
I pick up speed.  
It's late, and the moon is high and small.

Now I can see my street,  
the light from my own front porch.  
The chase has begun;  
the phantoms of a hundred nightmares  
bear down on me.

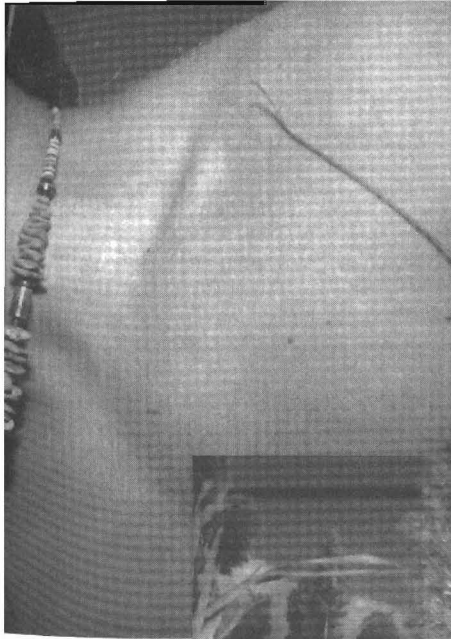
Blood begs for oxygen,  
I'm almost there.  
I can feel Their breath upon my neck,  
They whisper in my ear.  
You'll never run fast enough, girl.

I push myself until it seems my lungs will burst.  
I jump the last fence and throw back my head  
to drink in the night.  
My breath pearls the brittle air.

I slip inside, shaking, as the phantoms drool in defeat.  
They'll want a re-match, I know.  
I snuggle into bed and drift silently into Their world...

They wait among  
the arches bathed in moonlight, amethyst and emerald.  
I move among Them,  
Spreading my wings of downy flight.

Elena Cambio



Lonely Air

You stare across a crowded room  
    But there's nothing there.  
You seek an image of your old best friend  
    But all you find is air.  
You glanced across a busy street  
    But you still saw nothing there  
    Nothing except the loneliness  
    In each person's passing stare.  
You glimpsed a time of happiness.  
    A time of love and care,  
    But just as it appeared to you  
    It's gone. Turned to lonely air.  
You stared across a crowded room;  
And saw through the masks they wear.  
They're only masks, hiding something;  
    Something lost in lonely air.

Nicole Saehloff

Untitled

I stand alone in barren fields.  
The orange skies go beyond my dreams,  
beyond the unknown.  
I stand alone.

I walk on green pastures  
Searching for grains of sand.  
The winds fondle through my silky white dress-  
swaying to nothingness.  
Breezes brush against my bosom  
and tickle my eyelashes.

Trickles of rain welcome tomorrow's rainbow.

My feet wiggle through warm sands.  
The waves remind me of yesterday's romance.  
Searching for sea shells,  
I try to take myself on an escapade  
beyond my dreams.

Whirls of wind blow consistently,  
Playing with the laces of my dress,  
Searching to caress my nakedness.  
I embrace myself in solitude.

Only he, who lives in my dreams, can take me beyond.  
Far and beyond.

Aimee Whyte



Heather Hupola

**Amalgamations**

for T.S. Eliot

illigiti mi non carborundum

I. The Bakery

Pouring flower out of rusty tins to  
Make the dough to  
Raise the city to all its soggy and stale, stinking of disillusionment, grandeur,  
The old Ontario is caressing the fates with  
Langly yellow fingers and kneading out the air.  
And so I have come down to the banks of the Genessee to say:

Phaedrus,  
I have met you in dreams and old men's bedrooms  
Beside the electric fireplace,  
Beside the nightstand and the snore toppled drinking glass,  
Beside empty portrait holes in picture frames  
For grandchildren who never sent along hand-made greeting cards.  
I have come upon you in bar bathrooms  
Hiding among the names and dates of those who sat here  
And lied about love for my sake,  
While the woman in the next stall sobbed through swelling eyes  
Both thanking and cursing gravity, else she might float away.  
You were on the City Council, necktied to the arm of government,  
Leaning on mahogany tables which stretched out in argument and  
Ended abruptly at 10pm, as planned, before the decision.  
I have even walked with you and Prufrock through the half-deserted streets of London  
And have mused and dwelled and lay upon my own great failings....

Yet upon dissecting and reinstating my Harley visions  
There is room for all but the simple screw.  
And so I must admit,

I have not yet reached CALIFORNIA, Chris.

## II. A Profile

Here-- Park Avenue, East Avenue, Monroe--the city shines a little.  
The urban evening which draws out desire  
With a T-square and erasing shield upon the pocked and wrinkling streets  
Becomes not the answer, but the treasure map.  
The headlight disco lamps and streetlamps  
Wave and beckon, wind-rocked,  
Reflecting, creating, and disintegrating snatches of the truth.  
"Who are you?"  
The air thickens with stories untold and the consequences of their liberation,  
Like hot breath at the nape of a neck.  
"I say, the only people for me are the mad ones."

There, on the X, a solitary figure  
Dragging slow, contemplating the end of a well lit cigar and  
Tip top tap tapping  
Tip top tap tapping  
The old Sachmo tunes  
Lighting, burning, breathing,  
Lighting again until the ashes consume the Phoenix.

"Did you hear he lived in his car while he worked at IBM?  
Well, there's family to support,  
His mother's ill,  
And then there's those gray areas,  
The ones that no one knows much about..."

Hidden eyes turned inward, the cigar extinguished,  
He climbs out of the crevice where he has leaned on this dimension  
While day by day pushing into another.  
He is unaware that his countless evenings spent leaning here  
Have worn the groove of his sole into the pavement.  
He is unaware that the woman with the tattered canvass bag  
Of yellowed Steinbeck volumes,



tissue-napkin yearnings, empty Lifesaver rolls  
Comes night by night to stand in his groove as he drives away  
With his Chevy pistons  
Tip top tap tapping  
Tip top tap tapping  
The old Sachmo tunes.

### III. Meeting Places

It has come to a point of decision

LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN  
FALLING DOWN  
FALLING DOWN, MY FAIR LADY.

How many nights ago, how many years...?  
I had seen the fair  
Full of my salad politics and nerves.  
While leaning there, on, around, a cotton candy tent pole  
Egged on by the metallic whirl and the achy pounding of the calliope  
I turned to see the last little hermit-elf ducking his head behind the parting lips of lovers.  
The Ferris wheel turned around again.  
"That's the last one ever," I thought.  
And since then, I, holding my soul out upon a spinning plate  
Have offered up hors d'oeuvres to all the polite offenders  
And have seen the main course "accidents" first hand.

BROOKLYN BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN  
FALLING DOWN  
FALLING DOWN

I am sure I have heard the old ones whispering.  
I am certain of the settling into the infinite wisdom.  
I am certain that somewhere, someone is coming around.  
And also somewhere in the backroom of a bar  
The dusty couch is sagging with the weight of acquaintance,  
As the destitute filament longingly casts a feeble light onto

The shards of its broken globe.  
They glitter and gleam with all the glory  
Of gemstones upon an indoor-outdoor carpet jewelbox lining.  
The smoke from a lit cigarette rises to meet the smell of spilt beer and sweat,  
To make the perfect perfume desire.  
And out along the street the whores are waiting in too much makeup  
For last call.  
She said her name was Sonia.  
He said last night her name was Sonia,  
Sonia.

#### IV. The Understanding

The rain refuses to fall hard, but leaves the heavens sagging  
With a suffocating mist, hovering about the housing projects,  
And George Eastman Gardens,  
And Pinnacle Hill.  
It laps lightly at the windowsills, deserted,  
Raggedly sniffing a way into domiciles  
Then consoling its whimpering chill in a curl of fur beneath the dining room table,  
from Salvation Army, Walmart, Ethan Allen,  
Not a dustbunny to be swept away with the Legos and Cheerios,  
But in almost every way the only real member of the family.

Sister called today to say that Sisyphus  
Has reached the peak again,  
And to expect him coming down this way soon.  
The women making faces for one another at the salon,  
The men hiding behind car hoods in home garages,  
The grocery store clerks feigning smiles for their management,  
And the children learning these ways,  
Shall see his weathered face upon their doorsteps.  
And somewhere back in centuries Pontius Pilate shall ask them for mercy,  
But they shall send him away again  
(Thinking "My, his soles are growing thin.")

But I have been the fool before, and he has carried me,  
So today I shall send Sisyphus  
A new pair of shoes.

the pain of wanting

It ached through the corpse  
with burning spears,  
that at this time of night  
magnified each brand

The light had forgotten  
to touch this life

standing in a crowd  
unnoticed

Praying "find me"  
escaped a caged plea,  
where to beg is  
not so bad

To want, to touch  
and create fires with only  
one form to extinguish them,  
are the pearls of my need

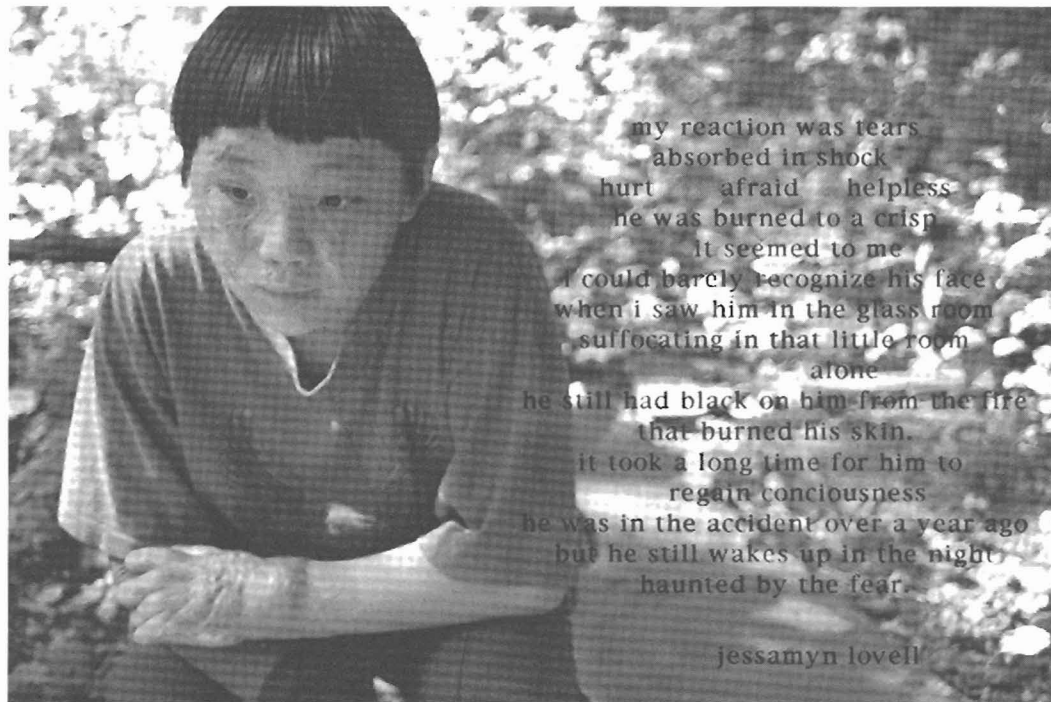
The mind placates  
the urge, yes, but  
to what degree

When the sensitive skin,  
the rapid breath  
and sweaty palms  
make real

The pain of wanting.

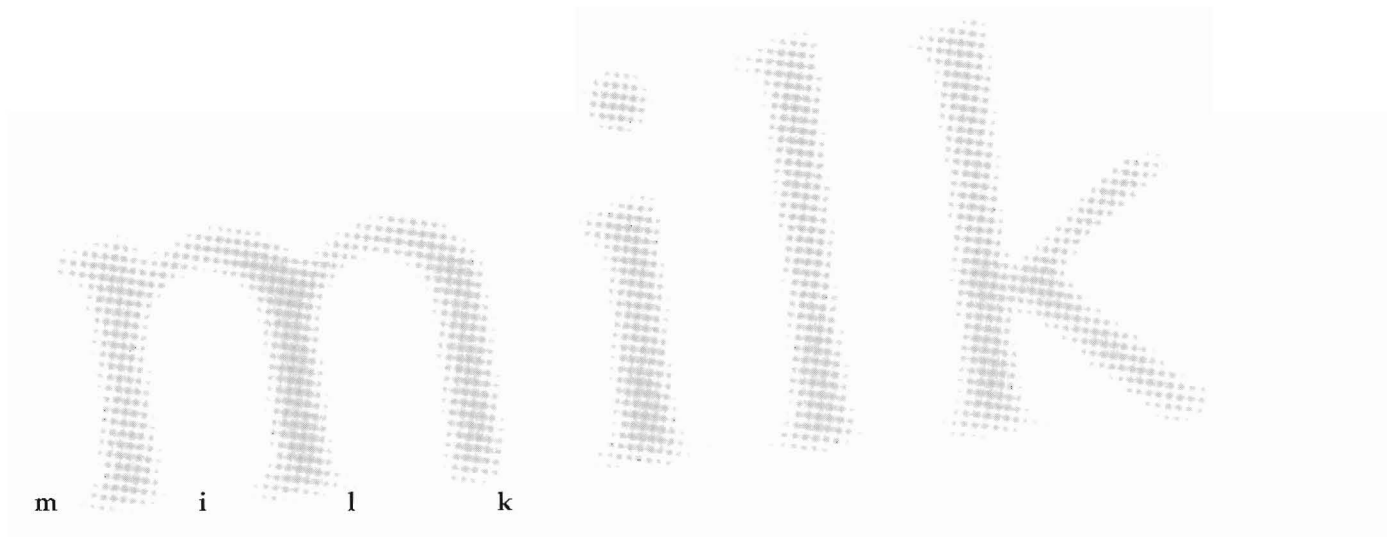
Jennifer N. Welsh





my reaction was tears  
absorbed in shock  
hurt afraid helpless  
he was burned to a crisp  
it seemed to me  
I could barely recognize his face  
when i saw him in the glass room  
suffocating in that little room  
alone  
he still had black on him from the fire  
that burned his skin.  
it took a long time for him to  
regain conciousness  
he was in the accident over a year ago  
but he still wakes up in the night  
haunted by the fear.

jessamyn lovell



After pouring the cereal into the bowl, he realized that he was out of milk. He decided to buy some.

Oh, sure, he could have made it through the day without it. He could have spent the day inside, watching cartoons, then boxing, then whatever else popped on on Saturdays, munching on dry cereal, not drinking milk, but he didn't want to, and he was feeling decisive, rarely decisive, and he decided to buy milk. After he showered.

Because, obviously, he couldn't just go to the store looking like a slob, with his hair all messed up and that spicy smell in his armpits. Milk and armpit smell just curdled together in his mind's nose. You needed to be fresh and clean to buy milk. He did, anyhow.

Except, of course, he was out of soap. He sat in his bedroom for a few moments, staring at the empty box of

soap that he had, for some now mysterious reason, placed back in his closet, next to his extra blanket, which is where he kept his soap, because it made the blanket smell nice. Like rain in some exotically clean, fresh place, like Ireland, when the Irish weren't blowing each other's brains out, or maybe like the desert, when it rains in the desert. He remembers, making the sudden connection, that he knows how to spell desert because of a trick a friend taught him in middle school. You always want two desserts, so there are two S's. You would only want to be in the desert once, though, so there's only one S. Dessert. Desert. He never forgets.

But he did forget to buy soap, and milk of course, but the immediate problem is no longer the dry bowl of cereal that he left sitting on the counter; it's the shower he can't take without soap. He could use

shampoo, but he doesn't have shampoo, but not because he forgot to buy it this time, but because he doesn't use shampoo. He just uses soap. Which he's out of.

He does have dish soap, sitting under a sink full of dirty dishes, but, hey soap is soap, and he takes his shower with Palmolive Clear. He remembers old commercials of an old woman named Marge, or Madge maybe, but Madge doesn't sound like a real name, but anyway this lady is soaking her hands in Palmolive, albeit the green kind, and it's so gentle that it....well, it's so gentle that she can soak her hands in it. Which is probably a good sign since he's showering with it, and he feels suddenly prudent, because he bought something gentle like Palmolive, which is probably perfectly fine for showering, instead of something like Dawn or Sunlight. He wouldn't want to have to shower with those. But Palmolive he feels good about.

He uses way too much. He doesn't realize it at first, because he showers with his eyes closed, enjoying the little vacation that a shower

provides, and he feels, although he would never tell anyone this, a little sensuous, exploring his body with only his hands, and wondering if that's how it feels for a woman when she would touch him. He wonders if women feel sensuous when they close their eyes and touch him, not that he has crowds of women closing their eyes and touching him, but the few that have, he wonders about those. Then he notices the suds.

He is covered with them. He is puffy with them, and he starts laughing in the shower, pulled from that autoerotic sensual mood into pure comedy, himself starring as the Michelin Man through the magic of Palmolive. He scrubs himself off a little quicker than normal, a little anxious now that the dish soap has behaved so unexpectedly. Madge can soak in it. He'd rather just rinse off.

Which takes a lot longer than usual, too. He rinses again and again, finally a fifth time before he stops feeling slimy. He suddenly pictures himself standing in line at the supermarket and bubbles coming out of his ears, and he rinses his ears out very carefully. One of them, his left one, gets clogged with water. He tilts his head to the side and bangs it against his hand, which is not quite flat, but not quite a fist, until the water runs out of his ear, feeling warm and

thick, and his hearing returns to normal. His hearing doesn't seem perfectly even at first, but he's pretty sure it's just a trick of the mind. He turns his radio on and turns his head from side to side. It's fine. His hearing is fine.

He dries off with his towel and remembers to brush his teeth, and so he brushes them. Very carefully. He hates dentists, and he is certain that he can avoid them through careful brushing. That is something else he never forgets. Six times a day, morning before breakfast, after breakfast, after lunch (he has a travel toothbrush with toothpaste in the handle. It's a lousy toothbrush but it's very convenient. And it looks like a pen.) after he gets home, after dinner, and before bed. He brushes his teeth with circles, and scrubbing, and massages his gums afterwards with his finger.

He puts on deodorant, and checks to make sure he has enough, because he is going to the store anyway, but he has plenty, so it's still just milk and soap. He combs his hair, and it doesn't do it's normal thing because, probably, of the Palmolive. It's very thin and staticky. He decides to wear a hat.

He gets dressed. He pulls his bluejeans off his desk chair and puts them on after he puts on his socks. He pulls on a white tee-shirt with a neon orange cliffdiver on it, although he's never gone cliffdiving, or even wanted to. He has bungee jumped once, though, and as he pulls on his sneakers, he remembers that night, two years ago, or maybe three. It was summer, college break, it was so warm, humid, in Florida. He was drunk. Not on booze so much, although he was a little buzzed, but he was drunk on the crowd below him. Hundreds of people underneath him, also slightly drunk or getting there, guys with their shirts off and screaming, girls, college girls, cute college girls, some of them anyhow, all of them in jean shorts and some sort of bikini top. Some screaming, some just looking up at him and saying "oh my god oh my god" over and over. He couldn't see them saying it or hear them from up there, but they had been saying the same thing each time someone jumped. It was at a bar, on the beach, on the Gulf coast. He can barely remember the actual jump. That night, though, he coaxed a girl back to his room with him, trading in the jump like arcade tickets, and they had sex in his little bed, sweating so much and making ridiculous amounts of noise, considering how many other people were trying to sleep in the same room. The best sex of his life. Hands down. That he remembers.

SOAP

The memory fades away as he stares out the window, gradually realizing that it is, in fact, a memory, and that he is back home, with no soap, no milk, and now, a bit of a hard on. He stares at the ground and does times tables until it goes away. Another old trick. It's seen far more use.

Shoes on, sneakers, and he's off. He locks his apartment and trots down the faded green stairs. He leaves his building and walks to his car, his old blue Escort. He unlocks the door and sits down in the cloud of dry heat. It smells like mildew and old plastic, and faintly like an ashtray, but it's been three years since he smoked. He quit right after Florida, in fact.

The car starts with a slow, grinding, whining ignition. The music explodes and he yelps a little, fumbling to turn it down or off. He turns it down. He always forgets to turn the radio off when he gets out.

As he drives down the street, he turns the music up, a

little bit at a time. He can't take it loud first thing, but he likes it loud, so he builds into it. He brings the volume up slowly, a little more at each stop sign and red light until it rattles the windows as he pulls into Wegman's parking lot. He twists the key out of the ignition and locks the door.

There's milk at the front of the store, in a convenience case, but he always gets milk from the back, with the rest of the dairy stuff, and he always takes the long way. Long to the point where he walks up and down every aisle. Except pet food.

He doesn't actually need anything but milk. Then he remembers that he needs soap, too. That's why he left the empty box next to the blanket. It was to remind himself to buy soap. It doesn't make much sense, now that he thinks about it. He picks up a pack of Irish Spring Sport on his way through the soap aisle.

He stares at one thing in every aisle, trying to decide if there's anything else he needs. A bag of sugar. A can of ravioli. A bottle of Snapple Pink Lemonade. He eventually gets to the milk. He grabs two gallons of skim.

He walks up to the express lane, with his three items and his wallet out. He smiles at the cashier as she rings him out. He smiles too much, and he makes a little too much eye contact. Just a little too much. Enough to make her look back down at the register like she's performing surgery. She's cute. Blonde hair, blue eyes, and a little short, which he likes, and a little chubby, which isn't a big deal. But she's already ringing up the next customer. And he's out the door, the automatic sliding door, with a three pack of soap, two gallons of milk, and a dollar less change than he should have.

??

Ed Heffernan

She is numb  
Numb with the effort of forgetting  
All pain is gone  
Except that deep within her  
The burning ache that never goes away  
He left it there  
And no one can stop it  
She looked at the empty bottles  
Damn those over the counter pain killers  
She should have known they wouldn't work  
All that money wasted. . .  
She had watched them disappear  
As one after another the slipped down her throat

    One after another until she was so numb  
        She couldn't lift her arms anymore  
            But the ache wouldn't leave  
                Nothing could numb it  
    She felt herself slipping down on the floor  
        She was afraid of sleep  
Too much time to dream, uncontrolled dreams  
    But she found she welcomed it now  
    Because somewhere, in the back of her mind  
        She knew this time. . .  
        There would be no dreams

Shawn Jenkins



### House cleaning

Young hands reach and grasp  
the Mattel-dream crack house  
that capitalism built.  
Oh dear, Barbie's lost her poly-  
form head again.  
Send her to the nut house!  
To the big house!  
To the house on the hill!  
Sorry, the whore house is full,  
full of perky pre-teen nipples  
plastering cybercities virtual  
walls,  
Is that your niece? My but she's  
grown fast...great ass!  
Maybe shed like a vibrating Ken  
doll (with dual speed control)  
for her 13th, or possibly some  
Flintstone-Prozac chewables.

Jessica T. Brandlin

## Exemplary Americans

Pamela Anderson Lee, Jenny McCarthy, Barbie:

All are role models for me;

They're exemplary Americans!

Donna Reed, Peg Bundy, Jenny Jones, June Cleaver:

If they were one woman I'd want to be her;

They're exemplary Americans!

All the 90210s, all the cast of Melrose, and Annette Funicello:

I wonder if they'll know

They're exemplary Americans.

Helpless females on the soaps who let their men pull all the ropes

Keep afloat my highest hopes;

They're exemplary Americans.

Maryanne, Ginger, the millionaire's wife, 'stead of fixing the boat,  
they're beached for life.

I bet none of them ever once handled a knife.

With the absence of Baywatch, how'd they manage the strife?

(Now THOSE GIRLS are exemplary Americans!!)

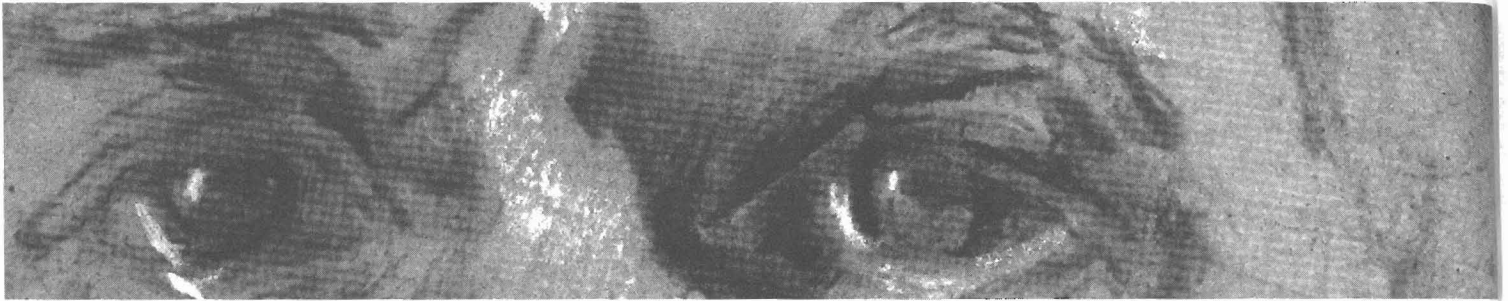
Lea Thompson, Daisy Duke, Riki Lake, I've no rebuke.

And what about the cast of Friends?

BY FAR THE BEST AMERICANS!!!!

Vi:rianna Calabria





Melissa Sanford

### Performance Art

FADE IN: EXT. - SIDEWALK IN THE CITY - DAY

Various important PEOPLE mill around on the sidewalk rushing to various important places. As they walk their ears are barraged by the voice of BILL. Bill is a middle-aged man with long hair who lives in a box on the sidewalk. The box is large and decorated with magic marker. Surrounding Bill's box is a large blanket filled with useless trinkets and old books, all of which was obviously retrieved from the trash. Bill is yelling at the important people trying to maintain their attention long enough to sell them something. Although he hits them with his best pitches they walk right past and don't pay any attention to him.

BILL

Excuse me sir! Would you be interested in purchasing any of the fine items . . . cheap bastard. How about you ma'am? You look like an educated woman. Could I interest you in a book . . . that surprisingly has been around more than you have! Ah, young man. I know that you have enough taste to appreciate our fine assortment of watches. If you'll just stop right here for a moment I . . . won't have to incinerate you and your entire clan!

INT. - STEVEN'S HOUSE - DAY

STEVEN is a twenty year old, tall skinny male who is dressed in baggy clothes, a hat, and a long black jacket. He grabs a dilapidated notebook from his room and begins to walk out the door. Steven's MOTHER stops him on his way out. She is a 39 year-old homely woman with too many wrinkles for her age. She is



wearing a dirty sweatshirt and jeans that have been stained and faded from years of housework.

MOTHER

Where the hell are you going? I could use a little help around here you know? I've got dinner to cook, I have to take your sister to her game at 6 and this house has to be clean before your father gets home or there will be hell to pay. Besides, shouldn't you be getting a job or something?

STEVEN

I have to go.

MOTHER

When are you going to get a grip on reality son? You need to get your head out of the clouds and get a job or something. We can't support you forever. We can barely afford community college.

STEVEN

I never asked you for anything.

MOTHER

I know, but I feel the need to provide for my children. I mean I understand the fact that you want to be a writer, but it's just not going to happen. No one is going to listen to someone who didn't go to college. So why don't you just get a job like everyone else?

Steven tries to push past her and go out the door.

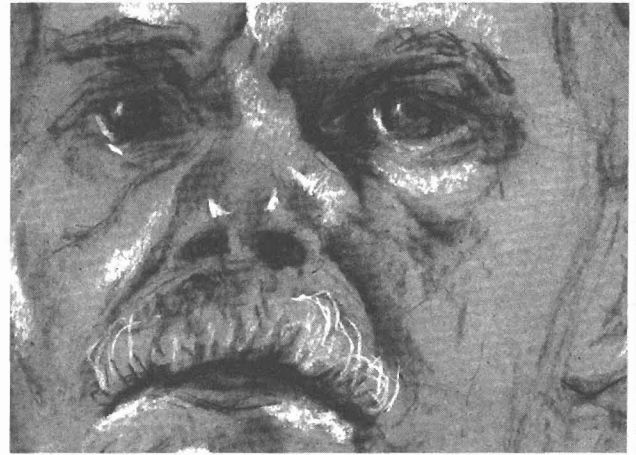
MOTHER

Steven we can't go on like this! All work is good in the eyes of God, so go out there and get a job. Mike says he has one just waiting for you mopping up at the restaurant.

He grabs hold of the doorknob, turns it and opens the door.

MOTHER

Steven you can't keep doing this! We can't afford it! He pushes past her and out the door. Steven's



mother begins to cry and then says a prayer for him.

EXT. - BILL'S SIDEWALK - DAY

Bill grabs an already broken vase from his blanket of goods.

BILL

Jesus Christ! Don't any of you people appreciate quality when you see it?!

He whirls around and smashes the vase against the wall beside box.

EXT. - BUS STOP - DAY

A city bus rumbles up to its stop and Steven



gets off it. He pulls out a cigarette and puts it into his mouth but doesn't light it. He walks down the street toward Bill. As he approaches he lowers his head to avoid eye contact with the bum.

BILL

Hey kid. What's brown and sticky? Steven ignores him and keeps walking.

BILL

A stick.

Steven cracks a small smile as Bill follows him down the street.

BILL

Come on kid, help me out. You're a student right? So buy a book. I have everything from Seus to Shakespeare. You might like what I have to offer. Steven keeps walking and enters Logan's Coffee Shop.

BILL

BEATNIK!

INT. - LOGAN'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A MAN in all black is at a microphone on a small stage reading poetry. Steven sits in the audience with the unlit cigarette dangling from his mouth. He is soaking in the words like a sponge. His eyes are wide and fixed on the man at the mic. Every once in a while Steven scribbles furiously in his notebook. When the poetry is over Steven claps loudly and jumps up.

STEVEN

I am the Lizard King! I can do anything!

With this as his parting words, Steven grabs his notebook and leaves abruptly.

EXT. - BILL'S SIDEWALK - EVENING

Steven exits Logan's still scribbling in his notebook. HE nears Bill's box. Bill is leaning against his box still surrounded by his "valuable merchandise."

BILL

Hey kid. What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back?

Steven stops abruptly, looks up from his notebook, and faces Bill. After thinking for a moment, he responds.

STEVEN

A stick.

BILL

Smart boy.

Steven walks over to Bill's blanket. And begins to examine some of his books. Bill sits up and crawls over to where Steven is.

BILL

Do you like that book. I think it was well written but it lacked any real substance.

STEVEN

This is the Bible.

BILL

I know what it is.

STEVEN

I should introduce you to my mother. She'd just love you. She's keep you in the house until she "lead you to the path of salvation."

BILL

Honor thy mother and father

STEVEN

She's such a bitch! She can't understand anyone that has views different than her own. And don't even get me started on my father. I don't think he's said five things to me my whole life

BILL

Poor baby. I bet your life was so rough.

STEVEN

It does get tough sometimes.

Bill pulls the books away from Steven and puts them back on the pile with all the other books.

STEVEN

What's your problem?

BILL

Take your "sob story" to someone else. I don't want to hear it.

Steven stands up and approaches Bill who has turned his back on him.

STEVEN

What the hell is that supposed to mean.

BILL

Kid, you have no idea what a "rough" life is. I hate people like you. You have everything going for you and you just can't accept it. You have to make everything harder on yourself.

STEVEN

You're just a bum. You don't live like I do. You beg for a living. Relying on people like me to help you out. What the hell do you know about how hard my life is?

Bill turns around grabs Steven and throws him up against the wall. He stands close to Steven and speaks to him in a low tone. His face is only a few inches from the boy's and the smoke from his breath flows into Steven's face as he talks. Bill's words course through Steven's body which is now tight and shaking.

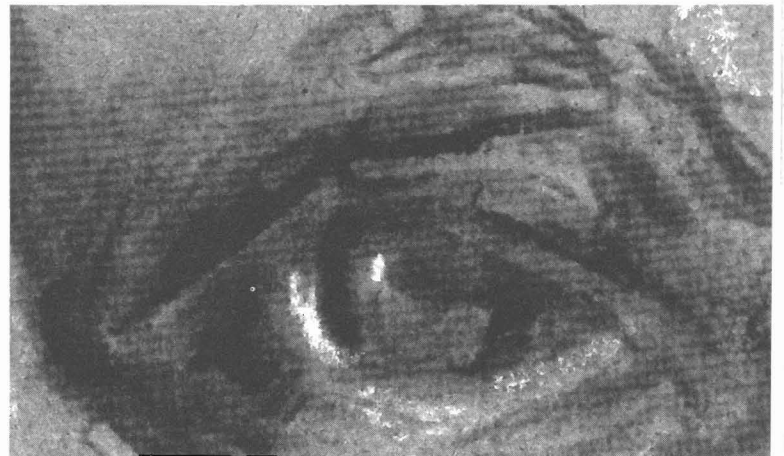
BILL

Yeah, I'm just a bum. And because I'm a bum I've felt the sting of this world of shit around us ten times more than anyone else living in it.

These miserable people give me their money because they owe it to me.

BILL

They owe it to me for being the generators of the hate and hypocrisy that makes this heap of a city work. And if you want to talk about a rough life, I can tell you stories that would make you tremble to even give ear to. I fought in a needless war and slaughtered innocent people, good people, I didn't





he just comes in and beats the problem out of you.  
You two make me sick.

Steven gets up from the table and leaves. His  
mother begins to pray again.

FATHER

Oh, stop it Linda!

EXT. - BUS STOP - DAY

As part of the daily grind, the bus once again pulls  
up to the stop, and Steven once again gets off it. He  
walks down toward Bill who is sleeping next to his  
box. Steven walks up to him and kicks him to  
wake him up.

STEVEN

Yesterday you asked me what I know. Well, I know  
that you're just as weak as I am. You've been  
through some terrible times. But now you just use  
them as an excuse to stay in the gutter. You'd  
rather stay where you are than risk being rejected  
by the world again. You hide behind your sob  
story and are bitter to the world to cover up the fact  
that you're scared. Just as scared to face the world  
as I am.

After this, Steven storms into the coffee shop. Bill  
looks as if he's just been stripped naked. He watch-  
es the coffee shop door close.

EXT. - SAME COFFEE SHOP - EVENING.

Steven comes out of the coffee shop scribbling in  
his notebook with an unlit cigarette dangling from  
his mouth. He walks by Bill who stands behind  
him.

BILL

Don't hold onto time. It moves with or without  
you. It's like trying to hold on to a passing train.  
Don't hold on to people. All you do is hurt your-  
self.

Steven freezes and turns around.

BILL

Don't attach. Don't hold on to anyone's anything.

even know. As a reward for my services I was greeted by a home that didn't want me. I've tried to die several times just to get out of this place. So, before you start assuming anything, tell me . . . What do you know?

Bill lets him go and walks back to his box. Steven is frozen. Staring at the bum.

BILL

Get the hell out of here. Go back to your terrible life in suburbia.

Steven slowly walks away and heads back to his bus stop. He thinks to himself and writes something down in his notebook.

INT. - STEVEN'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Steven comes down the stairs and into the dining room to have dinner with his family. He stands at his end of the table across from his FATHER and next to his SISTER and mother, on his right and left respectively.

MOTHER

Steven do you want to say grace?

STEVEN

Not really.

Everyone looks up at him.

MOTHER

Excuse me?

STEVEN

I said, "not really."

FATHER

Don't talk back to your mother.

STEVEN

I was just answering her question.

MOTHER

It's all right Dave. I'll say it.

STEVEN

That's right mother. Instead of dealing with this you can just ignore it like everything else. God, this family is so fake.

FATHER

I don't know what's gotten into you lately son, but you had better get it out of you quick before I come over there.

STEVEN

Oh and here comes dad. When things become to big for mom to ignore,

Throw out memories.

Pull them out like bad teeth. Don't attach.

What was, was. It's not easy to face.

Steven walks slowly, silently toward Bill. He is obviously impressed.

STEVEN

Who wrote that?

BILL

I did.

Steven now holds back his admiration.

STEVEN

It's a little too plain.

BILL

So what do you got?

Steven pulls out his notebook and flips through it until he finds the page he wants.

STEVEN

I walk down the street in a bad part of town. I can feel the cold stares of hate like ice cubes tumbling down my spine. Those who see me with the window closed say that I'm a man-kissing, AIDS dispensing, San Francisco-living, lisp-talking QUEER. Those who see me with the window open say that I am a caring, fun-loving, self-con-

make up things like the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy.

BILL

(laughing)

So, what are you a queer?

STEVEN

No.

BILL

Then what do you know about it?

The two stand facing each other on the sidewalk as if poised for a showdown.

BILL

Cold dark and lonely. The cell of my body closing in around me. Confidantes like bodies washing up on shore. Life the nemesis of my emotions. Taste the bitter cold steel.

Thunderclap. Drowned in a sea of red. Numbness. Talent destroyed, art lost.

Steven is once again impressed, but hides it from Bill under a face of stone.

STEVEN

Seems . . . forced.

Steven now anxiously flips through his notebook looking for another verbal bomb to drop on Bill. As he reads his next passage Steven becomes more animated. He throws his hands in the air and walks around excitedly.

STEVEN

Light my companion showing

me the simple pleasures of the world. On a car ride to nowhere. No purpose. Nothing to live up to. No expectations to meet. The anticipation of motion. This is the right place. I am real and filled with purpose. Not like when I'm sitting in my room. In the other world. The angry world. The frustrating world. What a great day this is.

BILL

The beginning seemed both contrived and corny. You started to get better at the end though.

STEVEN

Your turn

BILL

Frustration. Old man sings the blues. Rusted voice, broken heart. Confused. No guidance. Our hero begins his journey. His eyes spattered with the blood of the innocent.

Bill begins to yell the poem at the people passing around them.

BILL

Scorched by the injustice and oppression that surrounds him. Scared, fleeing, looking for a warm place, he finds only misery and stagnant mud puddles.

Bill now grabs some of the people passing him by and yells his poem into their face. Steven is both shocked and amused as he lets out a small chuckle.

BILL

Snakes in designer shoes scurry by. Dull zombies with unfamiliar faces. Being dragged down. Being worn down.

Bill now crouches down and softens his tone. Our hero has no place to turn. He turns to crumbling ash blown in the wind. His soul pours from his seared eye sockets. A cool wind blows.

Bill begins to rise.

BILL

Hope stops to tap him on the shoulder. Fuck everything.

HE springs up.

BILL

He springs up. He springs up and decides to do something about it. He will fight back. He MUST fight back.

STEVEN

Fuck you!

BILL

You didn't write that.

STEVEN

(laughing)

I guess I can't use that on Thursday then.

BILL

What happens on Thursday?

STEVEN

I have a gig at Logan's to read some of my stuff.

BILL

People are actually paying you to read that bullshit?

STEVEN

Well, I'm not actually getting paid, but there is going to be a representative for some publishing company there. If he likes my stuff, who knows what might happen?

BILL

I wouldn't embarrass myself by reading that bullshit in front of people. You try to write really perfect and pretty-sounding fluff about subjects you have absolutely no clue about. You're not even in your own writing. And that's probably good because if you wrote about yourself all you'd do is whine about your poor life at home. Just write about yourself. Tell the truth. Don't ignore the problem. Don't try to act as if it's not there.

STEVEN

In-fucking-credible!

Steven turns away to leave. But then comes back to face off with Bill.

STEVEN

It's not my fault that they ignore me! They act as if I'm a problem that they can't deal with. They treat me like an object-

Bill jumps up and puts his hand over Steven's mouth.

BILL

You know what I want you to do? SHUT UP! GO BACK HOME! ON THE WAY YOU CAN STOP AT THE GUN SHOP FOR WEAPONS AND ARTILLERY TO BLOW AWAY YOUR FUCKING PARENTS WHEN YOU GET HOME! DO SOMETHING! DO ANYTHING! JUST STOP WHINING!

Steven throws Bill off of him.

STEVEN

Like your technique is any better.

BILL

My technique?

STEVEN

Your technique for dealing with problems. Life has sunk you and you're trying to drag everyone down with you in hopes that by standing on their broken dreams you may be able to get high enough to see just a little light in the world. What you don't realize though is that those people just add weight to your load and make it harder for you to get free. The only reason you don't see goodness in the world is because you refuse to. You build up a force-field around you and don't let anyone get near you. Because you are afraid of getting hurt. The only problem is that if you don't let them in, you'll never see anything in them.

Steven starts to leave. Bill grabs his arm.

BILL

That was good. That was honest. That was real. That is how you have to write.

STEVEN

Fuck off. I'm through taking your advice.

Steven storms off. Bill just sits down by his box. HE grabs one of his books and begins reading.

EXT. - BILL'S SIDEWALK - NEXT MORNING

Steven walks down the street obviously dreading his next confrontation with Bill. He slows down where Bill usually dwells. Bill is not there and some POLICEMEN are junking all of the things he sells.

STEVEN

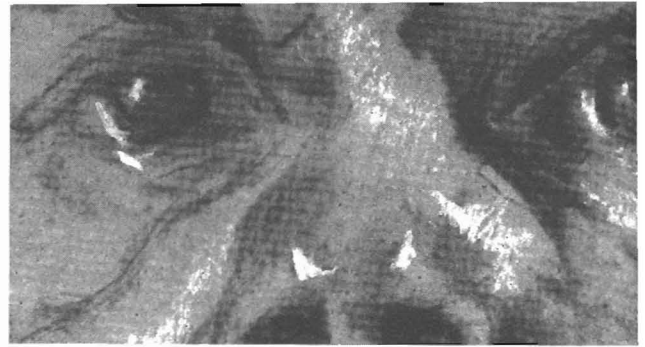
What are you doing with that guy's stuff?

POLICEMAN

Who's stuff?

STEVEN

The guy that used to live in that box. You



know.

POLICEMAN

Oh, that bum? Well, I'm sorry son, but we found him in the alley of 3rd and Main. He was beaten and robbed.

STEVEN

Bill didn't have any money.

POLICEMAN

What can I say kid? It's a scary world out there sometimes. If you want to see him, they usually take the frozen and dead bums down to the public cemetery on Rosemont road.

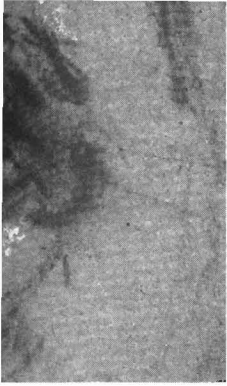
STEVEN

I know where it is. Thanks.

EXT. - ROSEMONT PUBLIC CEMETERY - DAY

Steven approaches a pit with three dead bodies in it. Steven doesn't recognize two of them, but sees bill sprawled out on top of the pile. IT is wet and very muddy. He checks his watch and begins walking back into town. The whole way there he looks through his notebook. One by one he rips out the papers and lets them fall, like a trail of bread-crumbs, on the ground. Finally, he takes the whole notebook and tosses it into the trash.





we see the mud from  
Rosemont Cemetery on his  
shoes.

FADE OUT.

Colin Smallwood

INT. - LOGAN'S COFFEE SHOP  
- DAY

An ANNOUNCER is at the mic.  
ANNOUNCER

Well, we still have no word from  
Steven Fontaine, so we'll-  
Steven busts in through the  
doors of the coffee shop. He  
walks directly up on stage and  
grabs the mic from the announc-  
er.

STEVEN

If you have come here the past  
few days you have inevitably  
passed the rude, obnoxious, and  
very defensive bum that hangs  
out in the colored box outside  
this shop. Well, unlike most of  
you I stopped to talk to him. He  
showed me the shocking beauty  
of honesty and human emotion  
in a world full of plastic people  
and lies. I'd like to thank him,  
but he's dead now. I'd thank him  
in spirit, but I never caught his  
name.

ANGLE ON Steven while he is  
talking to the audience. We see  
Steven's face and are slowly low-  
ered the length of his body until

## Window

The brown beast gallops in dismay through the  
green carpet while the white-tailed-watch-man  
steals the silence of time.

The taskmaster prances back and forth,  
leaving her presence in my domain.

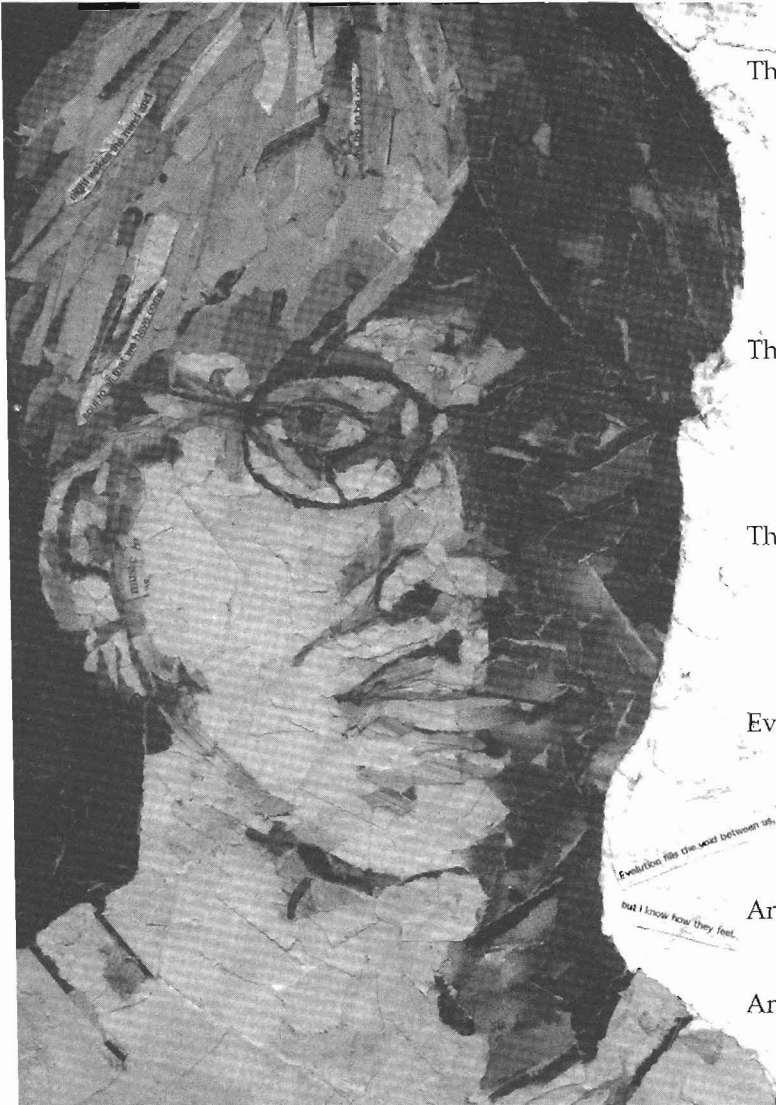
The terrorized beast discovers the trail  
toward the Totoket tracks.

Evolution fills the void between us,  
but I know how they feel.

And here comes the taskmaster fertilizing the grass.

And there goes the frightened beast,

or you might say the ass.



Josh Comen

Josh Comen

In Niagara Falls,  
Feces floats down the river.  
Wonder of the World.

--Amy Lynn Beaudreau



Josh Comen

